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POPULAR Computing WEEKLY

29 May-4 June 1986

Vol 5 No 22

£25 million loss rocks Commodore

COLOUR REVIEWS



- *Shogun* – Virgin
- *Biggles* – Mirrorsoft
- *Conquest* – Mastertronic
- *All in colour* – page 16

BASIC COMPILERS

What do compilers do,
and do you need one?
see page 12

● Commodore reports its biggest losses yet

● New 64 planned for launch soon

● Super-Amiga to follow this year

Full details below and inside
COMMODORE was last week planning a major push for the 64 in this country, following on its announcement of increased losses worldwide in the first quarter of this year. Chris Kaday of Commodore UK said that plans to "make the 64 more attractive" would be announced "in the next few weeks".

The company is known to be preparing an enhanced version of the 64, redesigned to fit in with the 128, and although Kaday won't talk about the nature of his plans it seems likely that they'll include this. This should give a new lease of life

to a machine which, although long in the tooth, continues to be a money-spinner for Commodore.

The financial results themselves are spectacularly bad, with the company showing a pre-tax loss of \$36.7 million (£24.7 million) on sales of \$182.3 million (£121.5 million) worldwide.

Commodore claims that Europe is performing strongly, with January to March sales of \$98 million (£65 million) up 53 per cent from \$64 million (£42.7 million) in the same period last year.

Europe is therefore accounting for more than half of Commodore's sales worldwide, and although the company won't disclose profit figures for Europe, chairman Irving Gould has identified the performance of the US operation as "disap-

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THIS WEEK'S NEWS

- *Mastertronic to go public?*
- *Storm breaks over US Gold's World Cup Carnival*
- *MSX 2 arrives – JVC's HC-95*

LASER GENIUS

AN EDITOR, ASSEMBLER, MONITOR AND ANALYSER THAT REPRESENTS A NEW APPROACH TO MACHINE CODE DEVELOPMENT.

THE EDITOR

Produces tokenised source files which occupy about half the normal space and accelerate assembly to three times the normal speed.

* Source files can be loaded/saved to and from tape and disc from within the editor. Source files from other popular assemblers can be loaded and tokenised.

* A full screen editor which replaces conventional text handling with a block/paragraph numbering scheme.

THE ASSEMBLER

A full two-pass macro assembler (co-resident with the editor) which supports input/output from tape and disc, conditional assembly, intelligent assembly of subroutine libraries and inclusion of named files from tape or disc.

* Built in calculator with access to symbol table after assembly.

* Symbol table may be saved and loaded for cross reference and selective assembly of subroutine libraries.

* Z80 mnemonics can be freely mixed with Phoenix, a high level compiling language.

THE MONITOR

has all the usual features of a relocatable front-panel debugger plus:

* Disassembly to screen, printer, tape or disc with CALL and JUMP labels automatically generated. Disassembled files can be loaded into the assembler, edited and re-assembled.

* 4 slow running modes with a trace facility that allows the path of a program to be stored so that bugs can be traced back to their source.

* 17 types of breakpoints are available - up to 8 can be set at any one time. Options include "down-count" and control of slow run modes.

THE ANALYSER

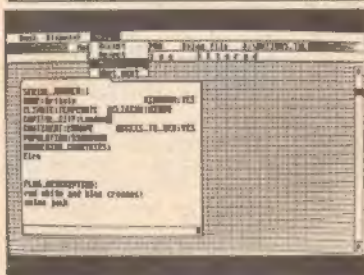
A completely new concept in program debugging. This unique ability allows you to execute up to ten analyser programs that scrutinise your machine code program while it is running. When a particular condition is found the program will break with an option to trace the path taken.

For example, if a program crashes, writing extraneous data to the screen, the analyser can be set to run the program up to the point that a "write" is made to a particular area of the screen. The path can then be listed to find where the error originated.



LASER GENIUS, the definitive system for machine code programming, is part of the OCEAN "Innovation and Quality" range, brought to you with the combined skills and resources of OCEAN and OASIS (producer "White Lightning"). Other easy to use products in this range will include extended BASICs, Compilers, screen designers, music composers and word processors to make your programming more rewarding and exciting.

SPECTRUM	£14.95	
48K/+128K		
AMSTRAD CPC 464/664/6128		
£14.95	TAPE	£19.95
COMMODORE 64/128		
£14.95	TAPE	£19.95



◀ SOFTWARE

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Trim cuts no corners – as John Cook discovered when he examined this information management system for the Atari ST

C64 Spreadsheet

A financial modelling tool designed for Commodore owners at home and in small business. John Lettice puts his account in order

▶ GAMES

16, 17 Reviews

Six new releases undergo trial by combat and we have, as they say, something for all tastes. A bit of empire-building in *Shogun*, adventuring in *Conquest*, aerial combat in *Biggles*, monster-bashing in *The Standing Stones*,

potholing with *Return of Rockman*, and some culinary mayhem in *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes*

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with this print dump which even gives hard copies of multicolour sprites

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Part II of our handy Address Master program. Useful for small mailing list applications

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Need a screen dump? Stuart Nicholls' machine-code program provides the answer – with extras

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What is a compiler? How does it work? Why should you care? David Ridge has the answers to these and other questions

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ABC

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Amstrad's £445 PC: the full specifications

AMSTRAD's IBM PC compatible machine, due for launch at next month's Amstrad show, is taking shape. It will be supplied initially in three versions. The basic machine will have monochrome monitor, 128K Ram and probably a single disc drive and will cost £389 ex VAT. A colour version with 256K Ram and twin drives will be £499 ex VAT, while the price of the top end model, sporting ten or 20M hard disc and 512K Ram, has yet to be fixed.

It now also seems likely that the Amstrad PCs will incorporate 5¼ inch disc drives and will have full-sized IBM expansion slots. This would allow the machines to run the current range of IBM software and to use the full range of IBM and third party expansion cards.

A full spec PC compatible from Amstrad would up the ante in the clone battle considerably. The cheapest PC clones are currently selling for



Sugar: £26 million richer

somewhere between £500-£1,000 depending on specification, and to compete on value as well as marketing Amstrad has to do better than this.

The company, it is suggested, is going to do this by bundling printer and monitor with the machines, and by including an enhanced graphics ability, possibly compatible with the IBM Hercules card. The machine will be fully compatible, but rather than using Microsoft's MSDOS operating system - IBM's PCDOS is a subset of this - will use rival

company Digital Research's CP/M 86 or DOS Plus. Versions of the machine may also include Gem and a mouse.

Amstrad boss Alan Sugar meanwhile has converted 5,000,000 of his shares in the company into an estimated £26-28 million. An Amstrad spokesman first observed that normal people could live happily on "one percent of the interest on that", and that Sugar wanted the money "for his own personal use."

Although Amstrad won't say what the money is needed for apart from "investment generally" the share offer - which was considerably oversubscribed - could be a sign that further major expansion is in the offing.

It does, incidentally, value Amstrad at over £500 million, and for the first time brings Sugar's shareholding down below 50 per cent. Other shareholders are institutional.

First to sell budget dBase II

FIRST Software and Publishing has won the UK rights to Ashton-Tate's *dBase II*, the market leading professional database, and is to sell it for the Atari ST, Amstrad, Commodore, and Tatung for £119. This represents a considerable reduction on the standard price, which can be anything between £250-£500.

According to a First spokesman the rights were won against stiff competition from other publishers, including Amstrad specialist New Star. He predicted brisk sales for the package, which has recently gone down well in both France and Germany. Because of the low price Ashton-Tate won't be handling hot-line support. This will be dealt with by First for an extra £40 per year.

Watford sets up dealer network

BBC mail order specialist Watford Electronics is attempting to broaden its customer base by setting up a dealer network. According to its managing director Nazir Jessa the company is moving in this direction because it feels many people are reluctant to purchase via mail order, and would therefore be prepared to pay a little extra in order to be able to buy BBC add-ons through their local dealer.

Announcing the move Jessa stressed the company's continuing commitment to the BBC micro, which he said still had "a lot of potential left unexplored."

The Writer

Our feature on Softek's The Writer word processor for the Spectrum (May 22nd supplement) contained some slight errors on pricing details. To set the record straight, both the 48K and 128K versions come on cassette, and cost £14.95 and £17.95 respectively. Each cassette includes a version of the program which, if you wish, can be customised and transferred to microdrive.

The 48K and 128K cassettes are available now, and the disc version is forthcoming at a price to be announced.

Commodore £25m loss

◀Continued from page 1

pointing". It seems likely that he is viewing Europe as the lifeline Commodore needs to achieve its aim to break even in the second quarter of this year.

The company claims strong sales of both the 64 and the Amiga in Europe, with Kaday reporting the first week's UK shipment of 1,000 Amigas al-

ready sold out. "The phones are buzzing", he claims. The company will not however be looking to bring the Amiga down towards mass-market status in the foreseeable future.

The first of the machine's successor, expected later in the year, will be a more, rather than less, powerful version, says Kaday. He won't give details at present, but Commodore is known to have heeded suggestions that the Amiga's blitter chip could usefully be made to handle larger areas of memory than the current 512K of video Ram.

When the machine was first designed this seemed a ludicrously large quantity of memory, but the possible applications for the chip are much wider than simply controlling graphics.

The blitter allows areas of memory to be shifted around in

the machine very fast, and therefore each Ram location controlled by it can effectively be viewed as being adjacent to all other locations controlled by it. Future developments of the machine could therefore have applications in vector processing. A further possible addition would be a 68020 processor, the enhanced version of the Amiga's current 68000.

Amstrad software

SOFTSHOP is now offering Amstrad versions of *DR Graph* and *Draw* at £49.50 each, *Sage Stock* and *Invoicing* at £69.99 and *CP+* and *Brainstorm* at £29.95 and £49.99 respectively.

The programs can be purchased at Softshop's Amstrad Business Software Centre at 66 Tottenham Court Road, London W1, or ordered by telephone on 01-251 0967.



Amiga: A big brother coming?

JVC aims £1,000 MSX 2 micro at Commodore Amiga market

JVC's MSX 2 machine, the HC95, is likely to be launched as a £1,000 Amiga killer this Autumn. The company was previewing the machine at a London electrical trade show last week, and according to JVC spokesman Pieter Glas it will be sold bundled with video grabbing software, allowing computer and digitised video images to be mixed freely.

The machine has twin 720K disc drives, cartridge port and twin expansion slots, RS232 and Centronics ports, video in and out and left and right audio. It also incorporates a second processor custom-designed by JVC. This is MSX compatible - although not 100%, it appears - and when switched in allows the machine to run two to four times faster.

It will cost between £1,050 and £1,100, which is significantly less than a comparable Amiga system, and probably cheaper than anything that could be put together for the ST.



The MSX team - where are they now?

JVC already sells one other MSX 2 machine, a low-cost variant, in Japan, and is to launch a third mid-range machine there shortly. Glas however doubts that these will appear in the UK in the foreseeable future, his feeling being that the cheapest machine should retail at £250, and that the UK market won't cur-

rently support this level.

The company will however continue to sell its MSX 1 machine at £99, and is selling a £169, mid interface which it claims will work with any MSX machine and any keyboard. Glas feels that attacking specialist markets like these is the way forward for MSX at the moment.

The plans of the other MSX companies seem to be considerably less coherent. A Mitsubishi spokesman volunteered the information that the company had "withdrawn from MSX", and when quizzed further said it had "withdrawn from MSX in the UK". The UK side had, he said, considered importing MSX 2, but had decided against this, and was unlikely to do anything else with MSX here unless the machine involved was "pretty dramatic".

Panasonic, whose machines are highly regarded in Japan, is in a similar situation, although less formally. The company currently has no stocks of machines in the UK.

Toshiba, MSX market leader in this country, has virtually sold out of its HX10 machine, and will be selling only its 80K HX22 version at £150 in the near future. A spokesman conceded that it was unlikely that Toshiba would be involved in MSX 2 here before 1987.

Cup controversy CP/M emulator

US GOLD's official World Cup games, *World Cup Carnival*, appears to be raising hackles in the industry. The game is, according to US Gold boss Geoff Brown, an enhancement of Artic's *World Cup Soccer* game.

"We've made it perfectly clear that it is an adaptation with enhancements", he says, "and if they [the customers] have purchased *World Cup Soccer* I don't think they're going to gain a lot." He does however add that distributors should be making it perfectly clear that this is the case.

One distributor who did not wish to be named did however tell *Popular Computing Weekly* that dealers were returning large quantities of the game on discovering its ancestry.

Popular Computing Weekly has also received a number of phone calls from readers who

have bought both versions and weren't warned by their dealers.

The message that *World Cup Carnival* is a version of Artic's game therefore doesn't always seem to be getting through, especially as there is no warning on US Gold's extensively revamped *World Cup Soccer* packaging.

Unitsoft is sunk

GLASGOW-BASED mail order discount company Unitsoft has ceased trading, leaving a large number of customers with their cheques cashed but with no software.

Popular Computing Weekly has already been contacted by a number of readers who are owed money by Unitsoft, and as the company crashed after

ESSEX computer dealer Mike's Computer Store is offering a cleaned up version of Atari's CP/M emulator for the ST at £6.50 including post, packing and VAT. The package, which was produced by former Atari employee Mike Wilding, includes one CP/M emulator disc, a utility disc incorporating public domain software, and a

14 page manual. Wilding points out that the latter overcomes "the usual Atari problem" of having the instructions for using the disc filed as a document - on the disc.

The emulator also has the German documentation supplied by Atari placed in its own folder on the disc, and the English text corrected.

mounting a heavy advertising campaign in the computer press it's likely that many more people have been caught out.

As Unitsoft was not a limited company, the settlement of debts is the responsibility of the two partners.

Accountant John Hendry and Co is currently going through Unitsoft's books to establish

the extent of the liability.

"It looks as though there's about £80,000 owing," said John Hendry himself. "The assets of the individuals involved don't seem too good. But we will be writing to all the creditors."

John Hendry and Co. can be contacted out 3 Lynedoch Street, Glasgow, Scotland.

Mastertronic plans a share flotation

MASTERTRONIC is planning a share flotation to finance "a major capitalisation programme" next year. A spokesman said it wasn't yet certain whether or not the flotation would take the form of an offer of a minority stake in the company, or whether it would be sold off completely. He did predict, however, that Mastertronic would be "looking at an exceedingly good punt."

The nature of the expansion the company wishes to finance, and hence the sum of money

required, is dependent on the success of its new US operation. This, the spokesman said, was moving steadily, but not astonishingly. The company's expansion plans encompass the computer market, but are also likely to include low price mass marketing of other, non-computer, products.

"Mastertronic came in for a lot of flak when it launched", said the spokesman, "but it has demonstrated spectacularly that, given the right product at the right price, there's a huge market out there."

OCP goes into liquidation

SOFTWARE publisher Oxford Computer Publishing has gone into liquidation. According to OCP's boss, Bill Richardson, the company suffered badly when French distributor Direco went down, and has experienced further difficulties in obtaining money from a number of outlets on the continent, which accounted for a great deal of its business.

This, coupled with the difficulties it encountered in getting serious software distributed in this country, meant that it couldn't continue without further finance. The creditors' meeting is scheduled for this week, and although Richardson hopes to be able to find a buyer for the company and its stock, no offers have so far been forthcoming.

Diary Dates

MAY

31 May
Dragon Computer Show
Osselt Town Hall, Yorkshire
Details: Hardware and software support for the Dragon.
Organiser: John Penn, 04203 5970.

JUNE

10-12 June
Comdex International in Europe
Nice, France
Details: Business exhibition covering computers, printers, peripherals and software. Trade only.
Organiser: Interface Group, 01-734 7282.

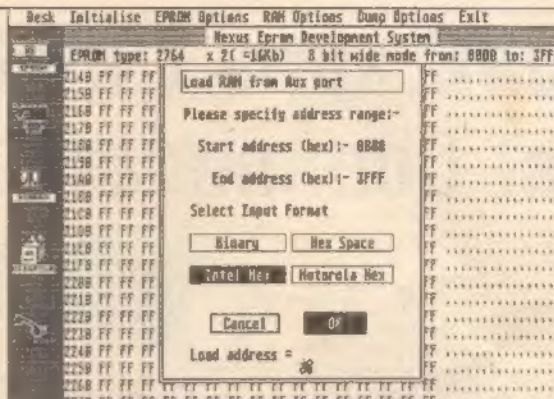
13-15 June
The Amstrad Computer Show
Novotel, London

Details: Hardware, software and peripherals for Amstrad micros.
Price: £3 adults, £2 children, £1 discount for advance sales.
Organiser: Database Publications, 061-456 8383.

24-26 June
Computer '86
G-Mex Exhibition Centre, Manchester.
Details: Business and industry computer show, formerly known as the Northern Computer Show.
Price: Free entry by business registration.
Organiser: Reed Exhibitions, 01-643 8040.

JULY

16-18 July
PC User Show
Olympia, London
Details: Hardware and software for IBM machines and their compatibles.
Organiser: EMAP, 01-608 1161.



Eeprom programmer

NEXUS Technical Services has launched an Eeprom development system for the Atari ST. The system's hardware plugs into the ST's cartridge port, leaving DMA and serial ports free for expansion, and has two Zip sockets for programming and reading Eeproms, an external simulation socket and an expansion socket.

The ST's Gem-based operating system has also been incorporated allowing, for example, data to be transferred from disc to Ram. Internal simulation also allows the ST to run either simulation Ram or

Eeproms.

Details from Nexus Technical Services, 38 Melrose Avenue, Reading RG6 2BN (0734 664559).

Amstrad languages

PROSPERO Software, which recently released its *Pro Pascal* and *Pro Fortran* compilers on the Atari ST, has transferred the two to the Amstrad PCW 8256. The two products cost £75 each. They are now available on Z80, 8086 and 68000 based micros.

Details from Prospero Software, 190 Castlenau, London SW13 9DH (01-741 8531).

24-27 July
Acorn User Exhibition
Barbican Centre, London
Details: Hardware, software and peripherals for the Electron, BBC micro and Master machines. Trade only 10am-1pm on 24 July.
Price: £3 adults, £2 children, £1 discount for advance sales.
Organiser: Editionscheme, 01-349 4667.

SEPTEMBER

3-7 September
Personal Computer World Show
Olympia, London
Details: Software and hardware for home, educational and business computer users.
Price: £2
Organiser: Montbuild, 01-487 5831.

13-14 September
Commodore Horizons Show
UMIST, Manchester

Details: Commodore hardware, software and peripherals.
Price: £3 adults, £2 children, £1 discount for advance booking.
Organiser: Database Publications, 061-456 8383.

26-28 September
Electron and BBC Micro User Show
Details: Software, hardware and peripherals for the Electron, BBC micro and Master machines.
Price: £3 adults, £2 children, £1 discount for advance booking.
Organiser: Database Publications, 061-456 8383.

Prices, dates and venues of shows can vary, and you are therefore strongly advised to check with the show organiser before attending. *Popular Computing Weekly* cannot accept responsibility for any alterations to show arrangements made by the organiser.



VIRGIN GAMES
presents

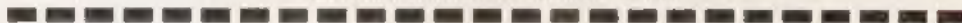
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Letters

Popular buggly

A friend of mine told me that some time ago you printed an article on computer buggles. As I have only recently been introduced to computing, I missed this article and would like to know if you or any of your readers can help me. I own a Commodore 64.

I have another query. How do you take a photo of a television screen? I have had a few attempts at taking screen shots of my favourite games, but without success.

Asmat Ullah
5 Napierhall St
Glasgow

This article was printed in the March 14-20, 1985 issue. Back numbers of *Popular* are available from the address and phone number at the front of the magazine.

Taking screen shots: turn all the lights off in the room (best to take pictures in the evening), use a tripod, set the exposure to one eighth of a second, put the aperture to between f4 and f6, take the picture and keep your fingers crossed...

Clever feature

In response to your news item regarding the 'virtual standstill' of 128K Spectrum software, I was disappointed, but not surprised, to hear this. 128K only software seems to be limited so far to the excellent *Knight Time* from Mastertronic. However, there is still some good things to look forward to.

Ocean's *Batman* contains a

very clever feature which detects which machine it's being loaded on and produces the relevant sound effects. Whilst this obviously does not warrant buying a 128K, it is an idea which more software houses should include as standard, saving them from having to produce a separate 128K version.

It was obvious that stories of gloom and doom might follow the Amstrad take-over, but speaking personally the option between versions of a game is something 48K owners do not have a choice over.

Richard Hewison
Lower Woodside
Luton
Beds

Dinky footwork

In answer to all those who took exception to my comments about *Movie* (Letters, March 13), let me go on to talk about *Batman*.

The graphics in *Batman* appear to be based on the same technology, but this time they add so much to the game, by allowing *Batman* to manipulate the furniture to some purpose.

The atmosphere in *Batman* is delightful, and the graphics so clear that the game is eminently replayable.

Suffice to say *Batman* is terrific and I find that I do not even mind his footwork. They are so much in character with his dinky footwork.

Hugh T Walker
Burham
Surrey

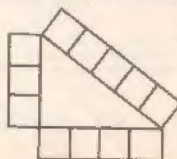
Puzzle

Puzzle No 210

My nephew has a number of identical cubical toy building blocks which he keeps in a larger plywood box which is exactly cubical. When full, this box will house all but one of the blocks.

The other day he was laying out right-angled triangles such as the one shown below.

As you can see, this uses just 12 of the blocks as the triangle has sides of three, four, and five units. Curiously, if he were to use all of his blocks he would have just enough to build a



much larger triangle.

What is the smallest number of blocks that he could have in his collection which would allow him to do this?

Solution to Puzzle 205

The amount that Luigi withdrew each week was 10,799 lire. Each day for seven days an amount equal to $8/365000$ ths of the amount in the account at that time is added to the total sum. At the end of this time a cash withdrawal is made. This is repeated 52 times, after which the amount in the account amounts to 500,010 lire.

In order to find the amount which has to be withdrawn each week, an approximate value (R) is introduced into the program at line 10. The necessary yearly computations are then carried out using this value and the resulting residue is compared with the 'target' figure of 500010. Depending on this result, the original value of

Star
Letter

Toolbox routines

I liked the recent series of toolbox routines for the Spectrum, written by Paul Murray, but I felt these utilities had one disadvantage: the output from the *Trace* and *Dump* routines could only be sent to the screen or a ZX printer, not to a 'full-size' printer.

These routines can be 'modified' to send output to the printer, or any other output device quite simply.

The *Dump* routine is the easier, and it does not require any Pokes, ie, the machine code is not changed.

First of all type

OPEN #2, channel

where 'channel' is the name of the output device. For example, if you wanted to send output to a printer through the interface one RS232 port, you would use *Open #2, "T"*.

Once finished, the

command

OPEN #2, "S"

returns the screen to normal use. This method can also be used to redirect output from the 'header' routine.

The *Trace* routine is more difficult. This is because the channel attached to stream 2 cannot be altered, without the program doing some weird things. Therefore a new stream must be used. The command

OPEN # stream, channel

can be used, where stream is the output (4-16), and channel the name of the output device. The value of stream would be poked into address 62387. Now when the *Trace* routine is run it will send output to the specified device, eg, an 80-column printer.

Chester Gillon
Colchester

A year's supply of *Popular* binders goes to Chester Gillon

Balanced view

We were intrigued by Peter Worlock's review of our *Pascal80* product for the Amstrad disc-based machines (May 15) as it contains a number of factual errors and some highly contentious statements.

Firstly, the product is called *Pascal80* and it runs on any Amstrad machine with a disc drive (ie, the CPC464 with DDI-1, the CPC664, CPC6128,

PCW8256 and PCW8512). It requires CP/M 2.2 or CP/M Plus with a minimum TPA size of 30K.

The GSX library routines are supplied free of charge so that owners of Amstrad machines which are supplied with GSX can write programs which access this graphics interface; GSX is supplied by Amstrad on its CPC6128, PCW8256 and PCW8512 machines. For own-

continued on page 10 ►

```
10 R=1000
20 CAP=1000000
30 FOR WEEK=1 TO 52
40 FOR DAY=1 TO 7
50 CAP=CAP+(CAP*8/365000)
60 CAP=INT(CAP*.9)
70 NEXT DAY
80 CAP=CAP*8
90 NEXT WEEK
100 PRINT CAP;R
110 IF CAP=500010 THEN STOP
120 R=INT(R*(CAP/500010))
130 GOTO 30
```

'R' is adjusted by an appropriate proportion in line 120. Each successive approximation is printed out until the required value is arrived at when execution of the program stops.

Winner of Puzzle No 205

This week, no one managed to arrive at the correct answers, so there is no winner.

Rules

The closing date for puzzle 210 is 24 June.

ON COMMODORE 64/128 NOW! Coming soon on Amstrad and Spectrum.

SEEING IS BELIEVING



NEXUS is arcade action adventure. It gives you an animated character able to punch, kick, walk, run, jump and roll. And he can fire guns and throw daggers too. You'll identify friends and enemies through the digitised faces of real people. Go in search of your copy now.

Nexus is available from good software retailers nationwide. Price **£9.95** on Cassette, **£12.95** on CBM disk, **£14.95** on Amstrad disk. Mail order from: Nexus Productions Ltd., DSB House, 30 High Street, BECKENHAM, Kent BR2 1AY. Cheques only payable to Nexus Productions Ltd.

COMMODORE

AMSTRAD

SPECTRUM



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Fight for your life



College for girls



Rescue a friend



On Spectrum too

Letters

◀ continued from page 8

ers of Amstrad CP/M 2.2 machines, graphics support is provided through a turtle graphics package using firmware calls. A turtle graphics package using GSX calls also is provided for those machines supporting GSX. The turtle graphics packages are supplied as Pascal source programs containing procedures, functions and declarations, enabling programmers to create turtle graphics applications in compiled Pascal – it is not a turtle graphics interpreter.

The documentation provided with *Pascal80* contains a complete definition of the language syntax accepted by the compiler, using syntax diagrams to make it easy to follow. A number of example programs are provided on the disc (*Dis.Pas* is a semi-intelligent Z80 disassembler, for example and *Birthday.Pas* demonstrates the use of random-access filing techniques) and in the manual, so we feel that the documentation is more than adequate.

For those who know nothing of Pascal or similar block-



"Is this an action replay of Artic's World Cup?"

structured high-level languages then yes, a tutorial book will be required. We mention a few suitable ones in the bibliography in the manual.

We would like to question Peter's assertion that Digital Research's Pascal/MT+ is 'the natural choice for computing students' as it is not an ISO-standard compiler. Prospero Pascal, which Peter didn't mention, is an ISO compiler, is nearly as fast as our *Pascal80* and is not that much more expensive on the Amstrad.

Although we would agree that Borland's Turbo Pascal is fast, it is not as fast as *Pascal80* and we disagree that it is 'the one for real language buffs' as even Borland admits that it is far from being ISO-standard.

We would like to point out, with deference to Peter, that HiSoft's *Pascal80* does seem really to have the edge over the other Pascal compilers on both performance and code size. On price, of course, we are unbeatable.

As Peter's review seems to us unbalanced, we think that publishing this letter in your magazine would help to redress the balance.

Hi-Soft
Dunstable
Beds

Peter Worlock replies: The name *Pascal 180* was a printers' error: I said it ran on any Amstrad machine; I said it supported GSX; I said there were demo programs; we agree a tutorial may be needed.

The turtle graphics business was my mistake, for which I apologise. As to the various implementations, I think this is

a matter of opinion. I wasn't aware that Prospero's *Pro Pascal* was available for the Amstrads; of the packages I mentioned none is ISO-standard and I wasn't able to benchmark them. I will take your word that *Pascal80* is the fastest, but I stick by recommendation of *Turbo Pascal* on the strength of the number of support packages available and the enormous user-base.

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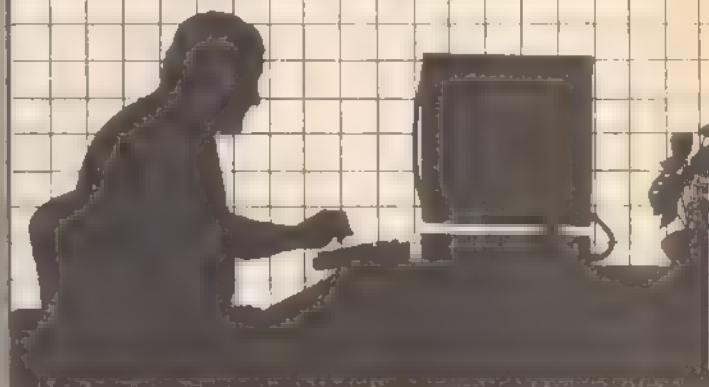
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Compilers — an overview

Professional programmer David Ridge reveals all about Basic compilers, their advantages and limitations, with particular reference to the Spectrum

Picture the scene: friends are enthralled as you explain the dazzling details of your latest program. You're telling them about the climactic ending where mutant teddy bears, armed with wooden spatulas, overthrow the Thatcher government, when someone asks, "What's it written in?" Noticeably shaken and with a quiver in your voice, you mutter almost inaudibly, "Basic." Your friends begin to look at you with that special gaze they usually reserve for an unrecognisable plate of food.

Is this scene familiar? For most people who dabble in programming the Spectrum, Basic is the most common medium used. However, after some programming most people find themselves using a few creative adverbs when describing the slow execution speed of Spectrum Basic.

In the last year or so, there has been a proliferation of Basic compilers. A Basic compiler, in the most general terms, will turn a Basic program into machine code. More accurately, most Basic compilers create a strange brew of calls to run-time routines interwoven with proper machine code. Clear as mud, isn't it?

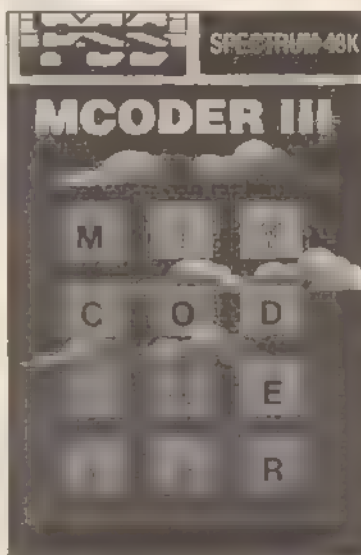
The Spectrum, like most computers, has a built-in set of instructions on the Rom chip. These Rom instructions are the brain of the computer, enabling it to know what to do when you push a key or enter a command. The Rom is made up of many individual routines which can be called to do their thing. Machine code programs generally contains many such Rom calls.

Mixture of calls

Compilers tend to do things a little differently. Most compilers have a number of built-in routines, usually referred to as the "Run-time package". These run-time routines are instructions which are called by the compiled code instead of the Rom routines. The code produced by some compilers will be a mixture of calls to Rom routines and run-time routines. Other compilers may use either their own run-time routines or the Rom exclusively.

You may well ask why the compiler doesn't call only Rom routines, since, after all, the Rom routines are in machine code. The answer is that run-time routines are generally used to increase execution speed. A good example is the *Circle* routine in the Spectrum Rom; it is painfully slow. If the Rom was used, there would be no increase in drawing speed because the Rom routine is already in machine code!

It's not that Sinclair doesn't know how to make a fast circle routine. Due to memory restraints, compact code is a higher priority than execution speed. That's why for example, *MCoder III*, one of the more



recent Basic compilers, draws a circle many times faster than the Rom. It is using its own run-time routine.

So what about the compilers that use the Rom exclusively? How do they give a speed increase? The main reason Basic runs slowly is because it is an "interpreted language". The computer doesn't understand Basic; it only understands the binary bliss of ones and zeros known as machine code. So when you run a Basic program, the interpreter is constantly changing the Basic into machine code at run-time; a very slow process! The compiler eliminates this step by changing the Basic into machine code before it is executed.

So you can see that even if a compiler uses the Rom routines exclusively, tremendous increases in speed can still be achieved because the interpreter is bypassed. These concepts are generally true for all compilers, whether you are compiling Basic, Pascal, C or whatever.

Speed increase

In that case, it seems a bother to learn machine code when a Basic compiler will do it for you, but the two main reasons are the tremendous bulk of the compiled code and the resulting slower execution speed. A computer can't be expected to create machine code as efficiently, elegantly and logically as an expert.

The most often asked question about Basic compilers is "How much of a speed increase can be expected?" That depends on whether you use a "floating point" compiler or an "integer" compiler. The

floating point compiler will compile Basic containing any floating point operations such as *Sin*, *Cos* or any operation using real (decimal) numbers. The integer compiler will not.

The code produced by a floating point Basic compiler will always run much slower than that produced by an integer compiler. But even so, in a case where you want to compile some Basic containing some floating point operations, the latest integer compiler in the world won't help you at all!

General rules

Usually, the advertisements for these compilers will not mention whether the compiler in question is of the floating point or the integer variety. A good general rule is, if the advertisement says that the compiler will handle all Basic commands, then it is a floating point compiler.

The speed increase you can expect will vary wildly depending on the compiler you are using, the Basic operations you are compiling, and the structure of the Basic. However, I would offer these estimates: a floating point compiler will generally yield a speed increase of one to 10 times that of Basic, with an average increase of approximately four times. An integer compiler will usually yield an increase of 20 to 120 times that of Basic, with an average increase of approximately 50 times.

Now, don't let these fantastic quotes for integer compilers sway you too much. Because integer compilers don't handle all of the Basic your Spectrum can produce, there are many restrictions involved with their use. These restrictions will vary from one compiler to another, but generally they will not handle any operation using real numbers, any complicated string manipulation or multi-dimensional arrays. You may find that for some programs, the restrictions imposed by the integer compiler make it useless. On the other hand, you may find the relatively poor speed increases yielded by the floating point compilers make them worthless!

BUT! There are many situations where a speed increase of four or five times can mean the difference between an irritating, jerking screen display and a smooth, fast and professional looking result. If you're can get away with using an integer compiler, the results can be spectacular! You can't really appreciate what it means to speed a program up by 40 to 120 times until you've seen it with your own eyes.

It is possible to use a Basic compiler as a professional development tool on the Spectrum, although one very serious drawback of Basic compilers is the size of the code they produce. I would estimate

programmer.

Further, these compilers either append a large portion of code to the compiled code or they must have the compiler present for the compiled code to run. Most Basic compilers take up between 4K and 6K of Ram. Suppose you're compiling a 1K Basic program. Typically, the compiled code will be around the same size as the Basic code, about 1K in this case. Now add the 4K to 6K for the compiler and your 1K of Basic has grown to 7K at run-time. It becomes less of a concern with larger programs. Another 4K on the end of 25K of code doesn't sound so bad.

As a professional programmer concerned with rapid development time, I am very interested in the potential of a good Basic compiler. To this end I have purchased and experimented with a number of Basic compilers. I would say that the speed achieved is perfectly acceptable for commercial program development, but the size of the code is not.

Which compiler?

Which compiler to buy? A very tough question to answer. I have extensive experience with the following floating point compilers: *MCoder III* by PSS, and *FP Compiler* (which has just been relaunched) by Softek, and for integer compilers: *Colt* by Hisoft, and *MCoder II* by PSS.

If you want to be prepared for all possible situations, you will need both a floating point and an integer compiler. I should point out that an advanced Basic programmer will be able to find many ways around the restrictions of an integer compiler. A novice may have to settle for the ease of use and meagre speed increases offered by the floating point variety.

My experience indicates that Basic compilers which handle the *least* number of Spectrum Basic commands, yield the fastest and most compact results. I know it's dangerous to come up with sweeping, general statements, but here goes: *the more work required to get the compiler to compile, the faster and more compact the compiled code is likely to be*.

If you use a floating point compiler, chances are you won't have to change your Basic listing at all and the results can be a little disappointing. If you can use an integer compiler, you may end up modifying your original Basic listing a great deal, but the results will be worth it.

As for which one to buy, they all have advantages and disadvantages. I should point out that *Colt* by Hisoft is an enhanced version of *MCoder II* so if you're considering an integer compiler you might just as well choose *Colt*. *MCoder III*, however, is a whole new ball game.

It's difficult to make a recommendation in the floating point category. I found *MCoder III* to be simple to use and compat-

ible with nearly all Spectrum Basic commands, but it lacks the kind of documentation that a programmer needs. I'm not saying that it has poor documentation. It virtually has none at all, and needs none because it's so easy to use. The problem is that there is no information given about the size of the compiled code or even its location. The insert doesn't even say how large a program you can compile!

The *FP Compiler* by Softek doesn't handle as many Basic commands as *MCoder III*, but it does give all the necessary information a programmer would want and the documentation is fair by Spectrum standards. I compiled many small test programs using both *MCoder III* and *FP Compiler*. The programs compiled using *MCoder III* ran consistently faster than those using *FP Compiler*. The difference was generally in the area of 10% to 30%. On the other hand, the *FP Compiler* can be easily transferred to, and used from, microdrive. *MCoder III* cannot be used from microdrive, but the compiled code can be saved to microdrive.

MCoder II (£9.95) and MCoder III (£12.85) are available from PSS, at 452 Stoney Stanton Road, Coventry CV5 5DG. **FP Compiler (£9.95)** from Softek at 12-14 Henrietta Street, London WC2. **Colt (£12.95)** from Hisoft, 180 High Street, Dunstable, Beds, and **Laser Basic Compiler (£19.95)** from Ocean IQ, 6 Central Street, Manchester.

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Money planner

Office Mate from Gemini is new on the Commodore 64, although other versions have been around for a while. The package, on tape or disc, offers a database, home accounts, Mailist and word processor. Not bad for £12-£15.

The title is rather misleading in some respects. The accounts program, for instance, is strictly for domestic finances, more a Home Mate than an Office Mate.

The database is a simple, and quite flexible little program. You can design your records pretty much from scratch, with up to 20 fields in each and 78 characters per field, so you don't have to use

easily forgettable abbreviations. Fundamental search and sort facilities are there, plus printer dump and calculating options on your collected data.

I am always a little wary of home accounts packages. If you're meticulous, you probably keep pretty good accounts filed on paper. If you're lazy about financial planning, then you're likely to be lazy about loading up an accounts program and updating it regularly. Luckily this one doesn't expect you to key in every Mars Bar you buy; it's essentially a month-by-month planner and budgeteer. It's clearly laid out, with easy to follow menus, and not too many confusing sub-menus.

The Mailist is also simple, and quite strictly defined in its names and addresses format.

The word processor is basic but functional – something to do a club newsletter on, rather than a professional report. As ever, there are the usual ingenious fudges to get around the Commodore's 40-column display and the printer's 80-column output; in this case, each single line on the print-out appears in a different colour on-screen. Word wrap, right justification option, block delete, word counts, etc. are included on separate menus.

As a package, its simplicity and ease of use are applauded, particularly for the price,

and the accompanying manuals are also extremely clearly written. The essential features are all there, but don't expect any mind-blowingly sophisticated features. And I still think it should have been called Home Mate – Gemini's companion package *Office Master* deals further with business-style utilities.

Christine Erskine

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A quality product

In the beginning, databases for home micros were little better than simple card files. Still, as the power of the machines has increased, so has, in general, the usefulness and quality of the product – enter please TRIM on the ST from Talent.

You'd expect a disc-based system running under Gem to be good, but there's more to TRIM than nice graphics and mouse control.

about TRIM is the way you can question the database, and extract information from it in the form of reports. The report generation turns the database into an intelligent mix of considerable potential power.

Like most good things, I suspect you would have to put in a fair amount of thought to get the most out of this program – but its comprehensive handbook and user-friendliness

Business users

Generic terms, as Ariolasoft and Batteries Included seem to have found, aren't always the best way to sell a product. One of the latest efforts from the duo (produced by the latter, published by the former), *Cal-Kit*, is billed as "the complete problem solving software package".

No more messy bank statements, income tax returns and so on – it sounds like a dream, but it doesn't sound like what it is. Yes, that's right, it's a spreadsheet.

The publisher's reticence as regards the dreaded word – extending to references to "worksheet" throughout – is understandable. Spreadsheets can certainly be configured so that they do sterling service via a vis bank statements et al, but this all too often means the user has to commit a considerable amount of time and effort to producing models. The spreadsheet therefore tends to have unfavourable associations for home users.

But fortunately, there's more to *Cal-Kit* than just a name change. As I've said, the effort involved in designing models is one of the major problems of spreadsheets, and Batteries Included has taken the obvious step of including a series of ready built models with *Cal-Kit*. There are a considerable number of these, ranging from the fairly obvious *Home budget* to the decidedly esoteric *Canning calc*.

The latter is a product of the fevered imagination of the

forms designers round Batteries Included, and you will find it "extremely convenient" if you do "your own canning and freezing." Ho hum.

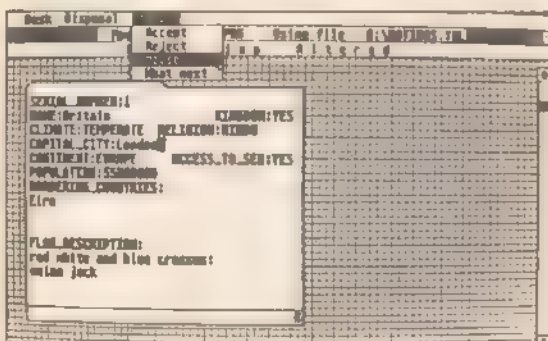
Nevertheless, the likes of this can no doubt be modified to apply to non tuna-related practices, and several of the other models should be right up the street of the home user with a bent to business, dealing as they do with electricity and installment payments, bank statements, heating and – nice touch this – business start-up.

The program itself is fairly easy to use, and, of course, allows you to design your own forms. The spreadsheet (sorry, worksheet) handles 98 rows by 26 columns, and includes a help-screen and a range of logical maths functions.

Personally, I'm not as convinced as the software houses are that there's a real demand for "home productivity" software, but as there's no profit for them in selling pencils and backs of old envelopes you've got to give them credit for trying. And *Cal-Kit* in this sense is a fine effort. It's neat, effective, easy to understand, and good value for money. It should do well with small business users, and if you want to get that home canning business going it could be just what you need.

John Lettice

Program Cal-Kit Micro
Commodore 64/128 Price
£39.95 (disc) Supplier
Ariolasoft, Long Acre, London WC2.



For starters, the documentation takes you through file creation and data entry step by step – you set up various fields (Talent calls these variables) and define field types and lengths, but unlike other, less flexible databases, these can be altered after data entry has started.

However, the best point

should guide you well.

John Cook

Program TRIM (Talent Relations Information Management) Micro Atari ST Price
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Tebbit goes east

Remember Shogun? The mega TV epic of a year or so ago? The one where Richard Chamberlain was washed up in mediaeval Japan and the locals wandered about saying incomprehensible things?

Well, Virgin has now created *Shogun* the computer game. In this version, the locals wander about doing incomprehensible things.

It has to be said that the game is only loosely based on the book/TV series. You take the part of any of 40 or so

characters with the aim of becoming Shogun - a sort of oriental Norman Tebbit.

To succeed you must persuade 20 of the other characters that you're the one for the job. You do this by befriending/bribing/threatening people you meet, and if all that fails you can try to kill them.

All of this sounds like the makings of a first-class strategy game but sadly Virgin has rather blown it in the execution. *Shogun* plays too much like *Sorcery*, with (admittedly nice) graphic characters wan-

dering about the screen when you meet someone, you can take a number of icon-driven actions including the said bribery/befriending etc.

One catch is that it's all too abstract. Apparently, levitation was commonplace in ancient Japan - if you need to get to the top of the mountain you simply levitate straight up for half a dozen screens. Sometimes you can walk through walls, other times you need to fly over the house.

The other major drawback is that for most of the time you haven't a clue what's going on. All the other characters wander about doing their own thing, and your only means of keeping track of the action is a single-line newspaper that informs you of events like 'Toranaga orders Kiku' and 'Pine takes a helmet near the village'.

You're told only how many followers you have and you'll

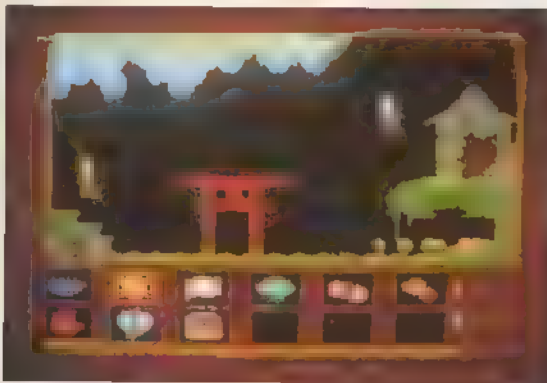
find yourself watching the display in bemusement as your band increases and decreases, apparently at random. Some kind of information screen, showing the state of your major rivals, etc, would have helped enormously.

It's not that *Shogun* is a bad game, because it isn't. The graphics are well done, and the soundtrack sets the scene perfectly. It's rather that it could have been one of the all-time classic strategy games and ends up being an average arcade offering.

Check it out for yourselves - some of you will love it, but I suspect that many will share my disappointment.

Peter Worlock

Program *Shogun* **Micro**
Amstrad CPC, Commodore
64 **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Vir-
gin Games, 2 Vernon Yard,
Portobello Road, London
W11.



Ghoul infestation

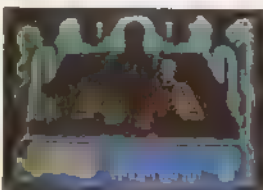
Derek Brewster is well known as the adventure columnist of a monthly magazine so it should be no surprise that when he writes an arcade game it has heavy adventure overtones.

Our pre-production copy of *Conquest* was so hot off the press it was also pre-inlay, so I can't tell you much about the plot, except that it sets your tiny hero the task of running round a vast, multi-room castle which is infested by as ugly a collection of ghouls as ever howled in the night!

The first thing to find is the axe, which returns boomerang style when thrown and seems to be efficient against 99% of all known nasties.

Let a snake sink his fangs into you and you'd better get a suitable potion quickly or it's fangs for the memory.

The game uses a rather odd control system. The four joystick directions control move-



ment but there are two other pairs of keys to select one of five objects carried and to select an action icon.

Graphically the game is somewhat spartan looking with its high vantage point 3D rooms. It's a clever idea but I couldn't help feeling it was more suited to the standard range than competing with MAD games.

John Minson

Program *Conquest* **Micro**
Spectrum 48K **Price** £2.99
Supplier Mastertronic MAD
Games

Looping the loop

Ive always thought Biggles had great computer game potential - Sopwith Camel flight simulation, text adventures (Go north Say to Von Stalhein 'You cad'), then stiffen upper lip, arcade action in the shoot-outs or aerial dog-fights.

Now it's happened, and there is, of course, a catch. The game is based on the film, not the books, and since the film is a travesty of everything true Biggles fans hold dear, Mirrorsoft has a tough job.

Biggles is actually two games - *Timewarp* and *The Sound Weapon* on either side of the tape. Completing the second is easier if you have already completed the first, but not impossible.

Timewarp is a fairly straightforward arcade game, with a nice touch which links it to the film. There are three scenarios: flying through the air shooting everything; moving through the battlefield shooting everything and chasing around the rooftops dodging everything. The first two are set in 1917 during the war, the third is set in 1986.

As in the film you are transported from one year to another with very little warning - just a thunderflash appearing on screen to tell you that the time

warp is taking effect.

Having completed *Timewarp* (or not, as the case might be), you can move on to *Sound Weapon* where the emphasis is partly on flight simulation (in a helicopter with your time travel companion, thoroughly modern Jim) and partly on more conventional arcade adventure scenario.

As a flight simulator, it's not going to give anyone at Sublogic sleepless nights, but



that's not the point and it is quite fun. But the thought of Biggles travelling through time in a helicopter is giving me sleepless nights and Captain W E Johns and Biggles himself will be looping the loop in their graves.

Christina Erskine

Program *Biggles* **Micro**
Commodore **Price** £9.95
Supplier Mirrorsoft, Max-
well House, Worship Street,
London EC2.

The holiness of an atheist . . .

The meaning of Stonehenge has puzzled some of the world's finest minds. But now we have the solution - it was built to provide a scenario for Ariolasoft's latest game.

The Standing Stones, written by Electronic Arts, actually takes place beneath Stonehenge in a sort of Arthurian setting. The ultimate goal of your quest is the Holy Grail, although you should keep an eye open for Excalibur and

some charmed armour along the way.

So, taketh up thy sword and prepareth entereth the bowels of earth.

The documentation is written in this sort of style, and it's very funny in places. Of a sample character it says "He hath the holiness of an atheist and though he be fleet in foot, he clearly suffereth from advanced leprosy . . . Choose thou not such a loser!"

You start by creating a

knight, preferably with reasonable strength in all departments. Intelligence and holiness govern spellcasting ability, strength, agility and hit points determine how well you will perform in combat.

Then, down in the dungeon something stirreth . . . In you go treading the maze depicted in 3D perspective graphics. On the way you'll encounter monsters, a few of whom are friendly but most of whom will attempt to rip out your throat.

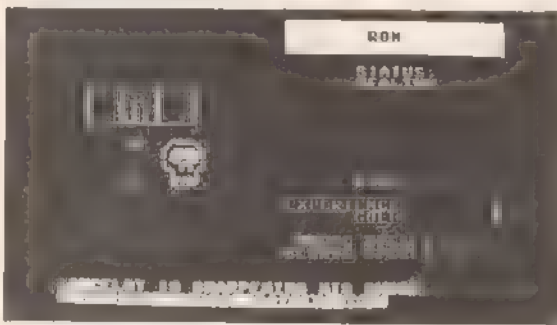
Sirtech's *Wizardry* is the classic of this genre and comparisons are inevitable. In the early stages, it must be said, *The Standing Stones* does not quite reach the elevated levels of *Wizardry* but the documentation hints at better things on the

lower levels. I lacked the nerve (and the hit points) to venture down that far.

One of the delights in store is leisure time at the oasis where you can trade, buy food, bat on the cockroach races, and leave messages for friendly characters.

At £14.95 for a disc-based game, it's not overpriced and you're guaranteed hours, if not weeks, of play. Well worth trying if you're a fan of the genre.

Peter Worlock



Program *The Standing Stones* **Machine** Commodore 64 (128 compatible) **price** £14.95 **disc only** **Supplier** Ariolasoft, 68 Long Acre, London WC2E 9JH.

Bureaucratic tasks

Strategy and combat specialists *Black Knight* are back on the warpath with a tale of land management and mismanagement in medieval times. The King has allocated a remote territory to you, which as a job is second only to cleaner of the royal piranha's teeth.

Not that you're being rushed. You have all of 200 years to raise 1,000 groats and placate his majesty. In this case I think I'd rather get the Abbey Habit and go for long term investment. Apparently that option's not open to medieval nobles, though, so it's gather your knights together to exploit the peasantry.

Actually *Sword and Shield* is a considerable advance on the old-style land management game when you just had to allocate resources. There's a warfare element to this which has totally avoided using a grid. Instead you issue orders to your troops, sending them off at a specified speed in one of eight directions.

When one of your knights comes into contact with the

enemy the inevitable battle ensues unless you decide discretion is the better part of valour. There are also castles to be plundered, and at the end of every year you can alter taxes, buy troops and deal with all the other bureaucratic tasks that test a hard-pressed duke.

The control system is rather novel with a large cursor to steer over the knight in question. The problem is that once your troops begin to space out around the playing area, it becomes increasingly difficult to keep track of them and to update any commands that were altered when their course met an obstacle.

I found the game quickly became repetitive and I suspect that even hardened wargamers will find too few variables here to make those two centuries of command worthwhile.

John Minson

Program *Sword and Shield* **Micro** Spectrum 48K **Price** £5.95 **Supplier** Black Knight Computers, PO Box 132, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 6LJ.

Caverns of rocks

Once upon a time there was a home computer game called *Boulderdash*. It involved a little critter called Rockford, represented as appealingly low-tech 2D, making his way through caverns of rocks in search of diamonds. Such was the success of *Boulderdash* that it sprouted a sequel, *Rockford's Riot*, which was vaguely similar but flopped because it was sold in a silly box. So it goes.

What, I hear you ask, does this have to do with Mastertronic's *Return of Rockman*? Well, the original *Rockman* was fairly similar to *Boulderdash*, and the sequel is even more similar. You have to guide Rockman through ten caverns full of earth, boulders which can sometimes be shoved out of the way dia-

monds which are your goal, and radioactive waste which is best avoided. There are a couple of variations on the original scenario, deadly bows become valuable sources of diamonds if waste falls on them (a new principle of physics I believe).

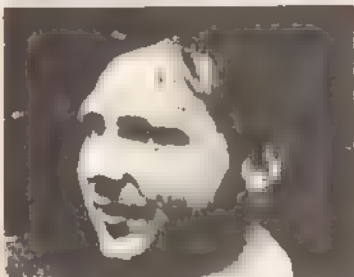
It would all be jolly good fun if it were as fast and smooth as the original CBM 64 or Spectrum versions, but *The Return of Rockman* is slow, lacking in polish and devoid of interesting sound effects.

Maybe our C16 was having an off day, but really, this is not one of the best Mastertronic efforts.

Chris Jenkins

Program *The Return of Rockman* **Micro** C16-Plus **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Mastertronic, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A 4HJ.





Highest common factors

Tony Kendle wades through Gargoyle's excruciating puns and completes the Marsport solution

Amstrad owners will no doubt be pleased to know that I have heard again from John Lyndon Smith and friends, who form Hacker's Unlimited. They have sent some more useful pokes that we will be printing in a week or two.

In the meantime, however, they have pointed out that the pokes given for the tape version of *Sorcery* apparently do not work on all Amstrad machines (as a result of some unguessable internal changes in the Rom I suppose) and they promise that they are on top of the problem and will be providing the necessary modifications in the near future.

Whilst on the subject of pokes, can anyone come up with something for infinite lives for Hewson's superb *Uridium* on the Commodore?

Alien items

Now for the rest of our complete *Marsport* solution. We left John Marsh having discovered the secret of the antidote and ready to tackle the problems in the vidtex clues.

As mentioned last week there are five very hard clues in all that point towards the factoring of certain pairs of items. However, before you can find and solve all five clues you must deal with the sept warlords (at last!) to make the rest of the complex accessible. If you use the valium from the chemists to get past the nerve gas on level B, you will find a peculiar item called a topee.

When you carry this item around you will soon see that the normally innocent herald robots start to behave like the evil warders - as soon as you see one shoot it or run.

This behaviour is the explanation of the clue, 'Heralds know that is alien', in short the heralds have detected that you are carrying an item that is 'alien' and have decided to attack you. It is helpful then to put the topee somewhere safe, both so that it is easier to survive and also so that you will be able to tell when you pick up something else that is alien.

In fact the next alien item is found by taking the kettle from Farr level in the key slot of the boiler room. In here you will find a decidedly dodgy helmet.

Factor the helmet and the topee and you will find you have the starlord's power booster. Combine this with your gun and you will be endowed with a hypergun that can turn the warlords into a smudge on the wall.

The first clue to solve can be found on (axa level 'One' is easy and full of aplomb'. Not an easy one to solve though. The thing that is easy is the cakes (as in a piece of) and the term Pt.OMB relates to the old fashioned term for lead, ie. you have to collect all the items for another cake and then all the items for another lead suit and finally combine the two. You will end up with something known as the 'R token'.

There is a clue on Daly level 'one draws near and throws away'. The thing that throws away is reasonably obviously a projector. The thing that 'draws' is a piece of charcoal (don't blame me, I didn't write it).

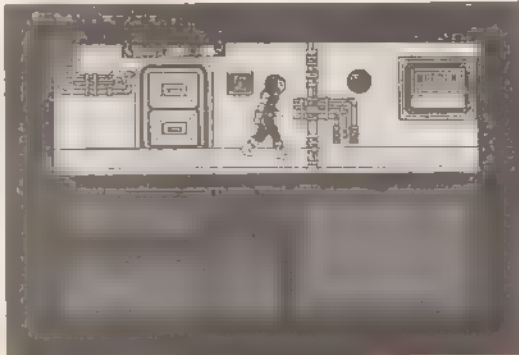
On level C you will find 'one monkey says why the other two can't'. This obviously relates to the story of the three wise monkeys and you want to find something that stops you from seeing evil (you must construct some more sunglasses) and something that stops you from hearing evil (the earmuffs).

On Elis level there is 'One says nothing, the other says it all'. The thing that says nothing is the mute from the music room. The thing that says it all is a manifesto from the oratory.

A mixed bag

The last clue, and one that had me stumped for days and groaning when I solved it is on level B 'One is holy with skill after church'. The holy thing is obvious - the strainer from the bar. The skill after church is more complicated because it refers to the 'chart' of the sunchart. The church is the abbreviation 'ch.' and the skill is of course the 'art'.

Marsport from Gargoyle



Once you have factored all the above pairs of items you will find yourself in possession of five tokens, E,N,T,E,R, and Y. It doesn't take a genius to realise that this spells something and if you factor all five together you will be supplied with the key that will get you through the sanctum.

The final problem you will now face, indeed the problem that makes up all of the last section of the game, is how to take the plans and get out of Marsport before the time limit runs out and you are blown to pieces.

As you travel around the various levels you will have found several peculiar items known as codexes which up till now have had no obvious purpose.

The last clue that you will find, and the one that provides the solution to this last problem, is on Joly and reads '7 from 10 makes you a bighead'. As long as you have mapped the game carefully you will find that there are strangely enough of these codexes and that one occurs on each of the levels A-J. If you take the items from each of the levels in turn that spell **BIG-HEAD** you will receive the message **HD6 GUNW**.

What this means when deciphered is that you should go to the corridor reference HD6 and fire at the west wall with your gun.

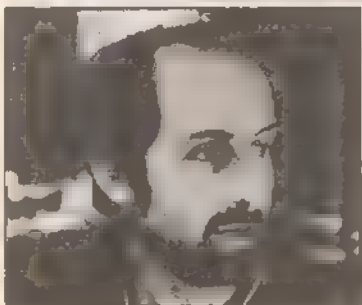
The screen should flash and you will find that a new up tube has appeared which is near enough to the plans to let you collect them and escape from the spacefield door with relative ease.

That is of course the end of our *Marsport* solutions, possibly to the relief of some of you who have been stuck on the last stages of the game.

Next week we will be back to a more mixed bag. It's always difficult to try to classify Gargoyle games as either arcade or adventure and in the absence of a more rational solution, Tony Bridge and I seem to be taking them in turns. I have therefore reluctantly sacrificed all interest in *Heavy On The Magick* and would request that all tips for this masterly game should go to him.

See you next week.





Real English

This week Tony Bridge offers some help to adventurers having trouble with their real English

It's been a long time since I gave any Help to fellow adventurers: that's mostly because there are so many new programs I look at and tell you about, but also because even four pages a month are not enough to fit everything in, and I think that the excellent help services provided by clubs like Roger Garrett's *Guiding Light*, and Henry Mueller's *Adventurer's Club Ltd* are all that the avid adventurer could ask for.

Mr T G Toon is getting in a bit of a tizzy about *Interceptor*. "I have just started playing *Forest at World's End*, and it is, to my mind, the most stupid, awkward game yet devised by these so-called computer wizards. Can you enlighten me as to the 'real English' that this game supposedly understands? At the start, for example, an elf attacks you. You cannot *Fight Elf*, *Kill Elf*, *Use Bow*, *Fire Bow* On Arrow and so on. Please tell me what 'real English' is, in computer terms! *Message from Andromeda* is exactly the same - unless you can help me, I will never buy an *Interceptor* game again."

Now that the *Interceptor* catalogue is down to a bargain £1.99, I'd hate you to miss out on the other *Interceptor* adventures. Mr Toon. They can indeed be frustrating in their use of language, and I agree with you - adventures shouldn't be mere word-matching exercises.

As to the Elf, just try 45 (or 7) 38,24,50. Very soon, now, you'll have to 16,42,9,46 and later, 58,23,33. So you see that the computer *does* seem to recognise "real" English, where many other programs would require you to say something like 54,33 or 18,33, that seems to me to be rather more of an artificial and forced construction than *Interceptor*'s.

Other questions that I've been asked about this adventure in particular, are: How do I get past the Dragon (66,45) and How do I get the Key (just 47,8 before entering the Wilches Hovel). The key, incidentally, is needed to unlock the chest, and the rope to enter the crater (when standing on the overhanging rock 51,63,19,6 and then 58,25,63). The coin and the food are not of any value, though you can course *Eat* the food.

Warlord is another *Interceptor* adventure which is highly thought of by Bernard Henderson amongst several others ("simply magic!"): he offers his help to anyone who wants it. His address is 25 North Wallington, Fareham, Hants PO15 8SN. Ivor Williams, whose name has been linked with *Interceptor* adventures many times in *The Corner*, says that after 13 hours of hard work, he has finally finished the adventure, which he reckons is "the most difficult yet from *Interceptor*, most enjoyable and highly recommended."

Highly recommended

To get started, 54,4,27,35,43,12,4,4,48,20, 52,38,20,19,39,48,29,7,29. The items not needed are the 10,53,30, and 50. The Amulet is the hardest item to get, but when you first meet the Druid, who has the Amulet, read the Scroll carefully to gain a clue as to what he wants. Help is needed on any *Interceptor* adventure, I'll be glad to help, and my address is Sgt I Williams, 26 Engr Regt, Wksp RE ME, BFPO 24.

John Wilson, an old friend of *The Corner*, has sent me a long list of solutions to *Warlord* problems. To get the helmet, go to the cavern on the beach and 58,23,5 then 4,52,58,62,13,5. To get the sword, wear the helmet, cross the causeway, then 52,4,52

and 57. To get the shield 38,17,28,17,64.

Organised breakdown

From Dennis Goodwin comes several letters regarding adventures that he is currently working on: complete with maps and sheets of very organised breakdowns of vocabulary, locations and objects along with the solutions to puzzles. His favourite appears to be *Morden's Quest*.

And here are some of his hints: To get the diamond 14,3,55. To get across the quicksand 41,17,31. To kill the pigmy 41,17,11. To bribe the carnivorous plant 41,17,61,53,67. To get past the waterfall 41,17,58,1,17,34,60,17,37. In the barn 41,17,32,49,19,48,26. To activate the Droid 44,26,23,2. The answer to Tarzan's question is 15. Although trying to use the cigar is usually met with the Man with No Name theme, it will be useful in the Arena. The password for the Adamantium barrier is 22. You can write to him (including SAE of course) at 18 Norman Way, Wellingford, Oxon OX10 0SS.

1	AND	33	BOAT
2	DROID	34	DAGGER
3	IRON	35	HARE
4	EAST	36	ELF
5	POOL	37	TEMPLE
6	ROCK	38	GIVE
7	KILL	39	RAVEN
8	RING	40	WEAR
9	ACROSS	41	USE
10	SKULL	42	LOG
11	BLOWPIPE	43	WEST
12	UP	44	INSERT
13	OF	45	SHOOT
14	BREAK	46	CHASM
15	FROG	47	WEAR
16	LAY	48	GET
17	THE	49	COUNTER
18	ENTER	50	BOW
19	TO	51	TIE
20	ACORN	52	NORTH
21	AND	53	PIG
22	PERSEVERE	54	GO
23	INTO	55	PYRITE
24	WITH	56	FROG
25	DOWN	57	SLEEP
26	BATTERY	58	CLIMB
27	FREE	59	VASE
28	GUARD	60	AT
29	TORC	61	DEAD
30	SILVER	62	OUT
31	BLANKET	63	ROPE
32	GEIGER	64	SALT
		65	HORN
		66	BLOW
		67	MY

Adventure Helpline

Going bananas? If you are stuck in an Adventure with nowhere to turn do not despair - help is at hand.

Fill in the coupon, explaining your problem, send it to us, and a fellow adventurer may be able to help.

Remember - the system only works if those adventurers who have solved the puzzles get in touch. Every week is Save An Adventure Today (SAAT) week!

Adventure Problem _____ on (Micro) _____

Name _____

Address _____

ADVENTURE HELPLINE

Sherlock on C54. How can I find the Old Mill Road near Leatherhead? N Barford, Fagotsvej 88, 2730 Hørsholm, Denmark.

Fourth Protocol on Spectrum. Of the seven questions which need answers to give you a keyword, I'm stuck on the last three: 1) What proof do you have? 2) Where did it happen? 3) How was the traitor recruited? Please help me. Steven Hill, 8 Penton Road, Loughor, Swansea, West Glamorgan SA4 2QG

Murder at the Mason on Spectrum. I can't find the rifle to shoot the lock on the manor gates open, although I do have the bullet. Anne Crossland, Aurrida House, Finstown, Orkney KW17 2ES.

Spiderman on C15. How do you defeat the ring master? Mr S Fry, 48 Lealholm road, Benton, Newcastle upon Tyne NE7 7NN.

The Neverending Story on C64. How do you save your position? Clive Tones, 19 Pra des Chenes, St John, Jersey, CI.

Mordon's Quest on QL: How do I defeat the gladiator? Where is the pump for the aqua-lung? Nick Pretzel, 150 Chiswick Village, London W4 3DG

Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy on Atari ST.
How do I show the door in the heart of gold that
I am intelligent? Mike Morris, 332 Banbury
Road, Oxford OX2 7ED.

Ship of Doom on Spectrum. How do I press the switch in the control room without being ejected into space? Gareth Edwards, 6 Broc Glare, Tall Trees Estate Penkridge, Staffs

Spiderman on Spectrum. How do I beat Electro? I can help with Hobbit, Hulk, Sub Sunk, Espionage Island, Inca Curse, Fourth Protocol (part 1), Mindshadow 1, voyage into the Unknown and Legend. Gareth Edwards, 6 Broc Clare, Tall Treas Estate, Penkridge, Staffs.

Spellbreaker on C64. How do I cross to the outcropping? G M Phillips, 8 Poolford Road, London NW8 5HP.

Fourth Protocol part 1 on Spectrum. I think I have 'gone' everywhere, but I cannot complete the final question. James Wheatley, 33 Whkeham close, Blaby, Leicester LE8 3HT.

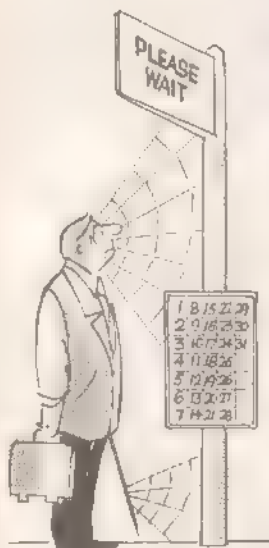
Ground Zero on Spectrum. Where do I build my shelter to survive nuclear attack? Mr N Jones, RNEC, Manadon, Plymouth PL6 3AO.

Subsunk on Spectrum. How do you unblock the sink? How do you get the pills out of the bottle? What do I do with the yoghurt? How do I use the vacuum? Any help please. Caroline James, 19 Burnside Avenue, Blackpool, Lancs

Robin of Sherlock on Spectrum. I can't get into the castle. What do you do on the mystic hill? What do I do anyway? Caroline James, 19 Burnside Avenue, blackpool, Lancs

Gremlins on Spectrum. I do not know where to go after obtaining the camera from Darryl. Chris Moore, 58 Ledbury Road, Priory Road, Hull HU5 5SL.

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Half, full and Simplex

David Wallin explains duplex and takes a look at the RS232 interface

This week I'll be looking at the RS232 interface. But first a full explanation of duplex is required.

For full information on the use of each pin of the RS 232c, see *Hotline - a personal guide to computer communications* by Ben Knox. (Century Communications, £8.95, ISBN 0-09-160931-3). This book was an information source for this week's article.

Duplex

Transmission and reception of data may be in one of three 'duplexes' or modes, they are: Full Duplex, Half Duplex and Simplex.

Simplex - This mode of operation allows data to either be sent or received, but not both. Simplex Data Transmission means that data may be transmitted, but not received. Similarly, Simplex Data Reception means that data may be received, but not transmitted. A normal radio receiver is a received, but not transmitted. A normal radio receiver is a simplex device, you pick up sound transmitted from a studio, but you can't talk back.

Half Duplex - Half duplex allows data to be sent or received but not at the same time. When transmitting data, you cannot receive anything, and when receiving, you can't transmit. 'Walkie-Talkies' and CBs are half duplex devices. On a computer-modem link the Tx and Rx pin are required. Also the protective ground should be wired up.

Full Duplex - Full duplex allows you to receive and transmit at the same time. A telephone is a full duplex device, you can hear and talk at the same time. Most home micros will work with full duplex modems, but are not capable of doing two things at once, (ie, transmitting and receiving) and so they operate in half duplex. Micros like the Amiga which can multi-task would be able to receive and transmit at one time. Full duplex is expensive and usually requires four lines, Tx, Rx, protective ground and signal ground (pin 9).

The most common duplex is half and, unless stated otherwise, the information in this article applies to half duplex operation.

How RS 232 began

Over 20 years ago, the Electronics Industries Association of Washington DC, decided that they needed a standard for connecting any computer (be it micro, mini or mainframe) to any serial device (ie

modem, printer or robot). A standard was set and this was known as 'Agreement RS232'. The most common RS standard used today, the V24 version, is agreement RS 232c which was introduced in 1969.

Many home micros (including the BBC) have an RS 423 interface port. This is a budget version of the full 232c. As most data links (connection of micro and device) require use of only five of the 25 pins, the RS 423 was designed as a five pin serial port. Also many micros that claim to have an RS 232 or an RS 232c, in fact have a cut down version, very few use all of the 25 pins.

The RS 423

As mentioned above RS 423 has only five pins. This is because most of the other pins are not required, and those that are can be 'created' by combining the available pins. The five pins used are:

Name	Abbreviation	Pin number
Protective ground	(Gnd)	1
Transmit data	(TxD)	2
Received data	(RxD)	3
Request to send	(RTS)	4
Clear to send	(CTS)	5

Some modems have the inputs and outputs (Tx and Rx) labelled differently, so check the manual for proper wiring up details. In fact, only three pins are essential as the CTS and RTS lines are hardly ever used these days. This is because their job can be done by a buffer, an area of Ram (about 128 bytes, 1K) in which data waits as if in a kind of queue.

CTS and RTS

The purpose of CTS and RTS are to prevent data collisions. This is when data is going in both directions, on a half duplex line and there is literally a crash as the two collide. This results in loss of and damage to data. To prevent this CTS and RTS are available.

If the computer wishes to send data, it raises or takes high the RTS line (it requests permission from the modem to send some data). In plain English, it applies to voltage to it. When the modem is ready and able to send data, it raises the CTS line (telling the computer it is clear to send). The data is then sent. After it has all been sent, RTS and CTS are lowered, the voltage is dropped.

Full duplex has no need for the CTS and RTS as Tx and Rx (transmitted) data and Rx and

(received) data travel along different wires.

RS 232c link

It is useful to know what all the pins on an RS 232c are for, so here's a list:

Pin	Description	Abbreviation
1	Protective ground	Gnd
2	Transmitted data	TxD
3	Received data	RxD
4	Request to send	RTS
5	Clear to send	CTS
6	Data set ready	DSR
7	Signal ground	Gnd
8	Received line signal detector	
9	Reserved	
10	Reserved	
11	Unassigned	
12	Secondary received line signal detector	
13	Secondary clear to send	2nd TxD
14	Secondary transmitted data	2nd RxD
15	Transmitter signal element timing	DCE source
16	Secondary received data	2nd RxD
17	Receiver signal element timing	DCE source
18	Unassigned	
19	Secondary request to send	2nd RTS
20	Data terminal ready	DTA
21	Signal quality detector	
22	Ring indicator	
23	Data signal rate selector	
24	Transmit signal element timing	DTE source
25	Unassigned	

Unassigned means that the pin has no use, the two unassigned pins take the number of pins up to 25, a standard connector size. Reserved means that the pin is there for the manufacturers to do what they like with. They are not subject to either RS 232 or CCITT regulations and may be used for testing, etc. They usually perform functions which only that device has.

The connectors

The two common connectors are:

- 1) The standard 9-way RS 232 'D' socket. An elongated 'D' shape. The female is usually found on the computer and the male on the modem/device. The pin numbers correspond to the RS 232 pin number.
- 2) The five pin RS 423, as found on the BBC and many other cheaper home micros. The computer usually has the female connector.

If you have any queries, tips or comments to make about any aspect of micro communications, David Wallin would love to hear from you.

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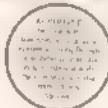
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FUNCTIONS

by Mike O'Donnell

One of the beauties of QL SuperBasic is the way that procedures and functions are used to 'expand' the Basic. They are then used as the usual Basic commands are, rather than being 'called', as in other Basics. For example, on most machines a function to return the cube root of a number would be executed by something like; *Print Fncu(n)*. More often than not you are limited to a two character name. On the QL the *FN* or *Proc* part is omitted, resulting in; *Print Cube-Root(n)*. The function name can be any length.

This brings us to the listing. A useful feature that the Amstrad has is the ability to change a string to upper or lower case with the *Uppers* and *Lowers* functions. My first two functions do the same (Once the listing has been entered, you can use any of them - there is no need to type Run.)

To change a string's case, try something

like *Print Uppers("Hello There")*. It will return "Hello There". Or you could try, *a\$ = "FrEdD" : a\$ = Lowers(a\$) : Print a\$*. This will return "fred". Only the relevant characters are altered, so numeric characters, punctuation, etc, are left alone.

The three remaining functions are fairly obvious. They give the string handling commands found on most other machines. Once you are used to it, Sinclair string splitting (I think) more advanced than that found on other machines, but beginners may find my functions useful whilst getting used to other aspects of the QL. They may also be handy for those interested in converting programs to the QL from other machines, without spending too much time altering things.

They are used as the same functions would be in other Basics, eg. *Print Lefts(a\$,4)* will return the four leftmost characters of a\$, while *Print Mids(a\$,3,5)* will

give five characters from a\$, starting at character number 3. *Print Rights(a\$,3)* will give the last three characters of a\$.

I have added some simple error trapping; if you ask for more characters than there are in a string, you will get only what is there, and an empty string will return nothing.

A peculiarity of SuperBasic is that function, procedure, and variable names are stored as soon as they are entered. If you like your commands to be in upper case, typing them so just once ensures that they appear that way each time you enter them into a program line.

The reason for the line numbers starting at 30000 is that I find it useful to save procedures and functions to microdrive, numbered from 30000 upwards. They can then be merged into a program, and the whole thing renumbered to allow further merges.

```

30000 REMark    SuperBasic Functions
30010 REMark    by Mike O'Donnell
30020 :
30030 :
30040 Define Function LOWER$(a$)
30050 IF a$="" THEN RETURN a$
30060 FOR n=1 TO LEN(a$)
30070   IF CODE(a$(n))>64 AND CODE
      (a$(n))<91 THEN
30080     a$(n)=CHR$(CODE(a$
      (n))-32)
30090   END IF
30100 END FOR n
30110 RETURN a$
30120 END Define LOWER$
30130 :
30140 :
30150 Define Function UPPER$(a$)
30160 IF a$="" THEN RETURN a$
30170 FOR n=1 TO LEN(a$)
30180   IF CODE(a$(n))>96 AND CODE
      (a$(n))<123 THEN
30190     a$(n)=CHR$(CODE(a$(n))
      && 223)
30200   END IF
30210 END FOR n
30220 RETURN a$

```

```

30230 END Define UPPER$
30240 :
30250 :
30260 Define Function LEFT$(a$,n)
30270 IF a$="" THEN RETURN a$
30280 IF n>LEN(a$) THEN n=LEN(a$)
30290 IF n<1 THEN RETURN ""
30300 RETURN a$(1 TO n)
30310 END Define LEFT$
30320 :
30330 :
30340 Define Function RIGHT$(a$,n)
30350 IF a$="" THEN RETURN a$
30360 IF n<1 THEN n=1
30370 IF n>LEN(a$) THEN RETURN a$
30380 RETURN a$(LEN(a$)-n+1
      TO LEN(a$))
30390 END Define RIGHT$
30400 :
30410 :
30420 Define Function MID$(a$,n,m)
30430 IF a$="" THEN RETURN a$
30440 IF n<1 THEN n=1
30450 IF n+m>LEN(a$) THEN RETURN a$
      (n TO LEN(a$))
30460 RETURN a$(n TO n+m-1)
30470 END Define MID$

```


SPRITE PRINTER

by Frank Bingley

Option (p) will give a printed representation of the current sprite shown on the screen. This will produce one of four different results, according to what other flags are set in the program.

If the sprite on screen is in hi-res mode then a hi-res replica will be produced. The numbers at the top of the grid represent the bit numbers. On the other hand, if the sprite on screen is in multi-colour mode, then a multi-colour picture will be printed. (The colours represented by shades of grey.)

To get a true bit pattern for multi-colour sprites, it will be necessary to press option (o) before printing the sprite. Finally, with the sprite pointer pointing to block number #0, a blank grid will be drawn. This is useful for designing sprites without the computer or editor or where a sequence of sprites are needed for animation purposes, where only slight pixel differences are required. (The sprite pointer is set at this position by default.)

It should be pointed out at this stage, that if some sprite data is stored very low

A useful utility for any CBM64 programmer is a sprite editor. These excellent programs make easy work of creating sprites, so much so that it doesn't take long to accumulate quite a collection.

What with sprites for one program or another, some stored as Basic loaders, some as 'Boot Files', it can become quite a tricky business remembering what you have, where it is stored, or what part of memory holds the sprite data!

Having been in this position myself, it didn't take long for me to realise that it would be handy to have some sort of catalogue with a computer print-out of each sprite and where it is sorted, etc. This prompted me to write the following utility called Sprite Printer.

Written in Basic, this short program is not a sprite editor, but is designed to be used in conjunction with one, especially if you have a machine code editor which resides from \$C000 upwards. It is then possible to have both programs in memory at once, switching between each utility as necessary. For those of you with basic sprite editors, it would be best to design your sprites first, then load 'Sprite Printer' whilst the sprite data is still in place, to get printed records.

When run, the program will present a table of options along with a sprite on the right-hand side of the screen.

Option (m) will display the sprite in multicolour mode.

Option (o) will display the sprite in hi-res mode.

Option (+) and Option (-) is a fast search facility which can be used to find known or unknown sprites. These two options simply increment or decrement the sprite pointer to the desired location. It will wrap-around at each end of the table.

Option (e) will end the program.

```

1 DIM SP(64):POKE$3285,6:POKE$3286,5:POKE$3287,
  1:FORA=1TO13:SP$=SP$+CHR$(32)
2 NEXTA:POKE$3248,255:POKE$3249,166:POKE$3269,1
  :POKE$3280,10:POKE$3281,0:DD=0
3 FORA=1TO8:READD:9(A)=D:NEXT:OPEN#4:OPEN#4,6
  :PRINT#6,CHR$(23):POKE$50,255
4 FORA=1TO8:READD:52(A)=D:NEXTA:V=0:POKE$3276,1
5 PRINTCHR$(147)CHR$(150)CHR$(10)SP$:"SPRITE PRINTER":SP$
6 PRINT"OPTIONS --":PRINT:PRINT" (H) MULTICOLOUR ON"
7 PRINT:PRINT" (O) MULTICOLOUR OFF"
8 PRINT:PRINT" (P) PRINT SPRITE":PRINT:PRINT" (+) INCREMENT SPRITE"
9 PRINT:PRINT" (-) DECREMENT SPRITE":PRINT:PRINT
  "(E) END":PRINT:PRINT
10 GETOS:IFOS="P"THEN25
11 IFOS="H"THENPOKE$3276,1:V=1
12 IFOS="O"THENPOKE$3276,0:V=0
13 IFOS="--"THENDD=DD+1:IFDD=256THENDD=0
14 IFOS="--"THENDD=DD-1:IFDD=-1THENDD=255
15 IFOS="E"THEN200
16 POKE2040,DD:PRINTCHR$(145):"CURRENT SPRITE BLOCK
  NO.":DD:CHR$(157)" "
17 GOTO10
25 AD=DD*64:PS="--"
26 IFDD=0THENFORA=1TO64:SP(A)=0:NEXT:GOTO36
27 FORA=1TO64:SP(A)=PEEK(AD-1+A):NEXT
28 PRINT:PRINT"ADDRESS --AD"
29 PRINT#4,"SPRITE NUMBER --DD"AD:PRINT#4,
30 PRINT#4,SPC(6)"765432107654321076543210"CHR$(13)
31 IFV=1THEN300
32 A=1:FORB=1TO21:PRINT#4,8,SPC(4)-(LEN(STR$(B)))):CHR$(167):
  FORC=1TO3:FORF=1TO8
33 IFSP(A)=>S(F)THENGD$UB100:SP(A)=SP(A)-S(F):GOTO65
34 PS=PS+CHR$(112)
35 NEXIF:A=A+1:PRINT#4,PS:PS="--":NEXTC:PRINT#4,NEXTB
36 PRINT#4,SPC(6):FORA=1TO24:PRINT#4,CHR$(163):NEXTA:PRINT#4,
  90 GOTO5
37 PS=PS+CHR$(18)+CHR$(32)+CHR$(146):RETURN
38 PRINT#4,CLOSE#4,6:POKE$3285,0:END
39 A=1:FORB=1TO21:PRINT#4,8,SPC(4)-(LEN(STR$(B)))):CHR$(167):
40 FORC=1TO3:FORF=1TO4:X=SP(A)AND52(F)
41 IFX=0THENPS=PS+CHR$(112)+CHR$(112):GOTO360
42 IFX=52(F)+4)THENPS=PS+CHR$(166)+CHR$(166):GOTO360
43 PS=PS+CHR$(17)+CHR$(169)+CHR$(169)+CHR$(145)
44 NEXIF:A=A+1:PRINT#4,PS:PS="--":NEXTC:PRINT#4,NEXTB
45 GOTO75
46 DATA 128,64,32,16,8,4,2,1
47 DATA 192,48,12,3,64,16,4,1
  
```

Programming: C64

down memory, then it may clash with where this program is stored. Equally so, due to the way the computer handles strings, prolonged use of Sprite Printer may overwrite some sprite data, but this is seldom the case

Program Notes

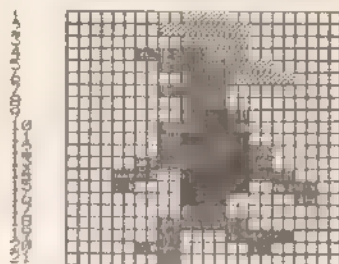
1-2 Set up array to hold sprite data.

3-4 Initialise sprite colours and positions, screens colours.
5-9 Fill arrays with bit data, open channels printer
10-17 Screen display
25 Analyse input
Fill sprite data array with zeros if sprite pointer at zero.
30 Fill sprite data array.

36-90 Work out bit values and print hi-res sprite
100 Subroutine to print reverse space
200 Close printer channels, turn off sprite and end program.
300-370 Work out multicolour bit values and print multicolour sprite.
500-510 Data for bit values
520-560 Credits.

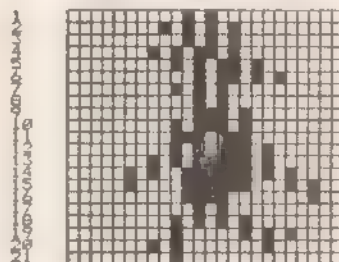
SPRITE NUMBER - 128 ADDRESS - 8192

765432107654321076543210



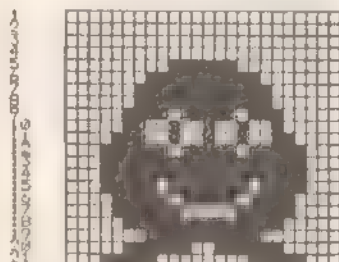
SPRITE NUMBER - 128 ADDRESS - 8192

765432107654321076543210



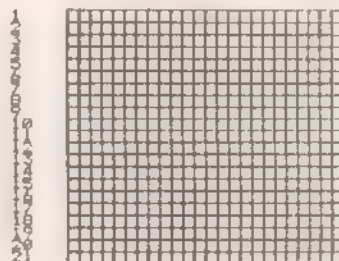
SPRITE NUMBER - 131 ADDRESS - 8384

765432107654321076543210



SPRITE NUMBER - 131 ADDRESS - 8384

765432107654321076543210



Programming: Amstrad



DATA BASE

by B Baxter

This utility program (printed over two weeks) was generated simply out of need and the fact that at the time I could find nothing similar at a realistic price.

My requirements were for a simple data base of names and addresses which I could access either as a group or individually and then print-out either to labels or a list. The Search and Delete routines were added as a means of quickly locating a particular file which needed to be

amended or deleted without fuss whilst the Alphabetical Sort was added to tidy up the list. I now keep all my names and addresses on this data base and intend to elaborate still further with telephone numbers, etc.

At least it is a package which didn't cost me an arm and a leg and which I find was well worth the trouble to generate.

The print-out to labels was designed for the 'single label roll as I found these convenient, but little modification is re-

quired for the multiple labels rolls. Printer output was to an Epson printer MX 82F/T although for the purpose of this article I did not include an instruction to cancel the 'Step over Perforation' which can be obtained by the integral switches on this machine. My own copy has this built in the label option routine and will be obvious by the make of printer used.

For individual addressing of envelopes by the printer, a simple TAB instruction is used to position the print head as required

Programming: Amstrad

I included a variable X for my own use which could be set to labulate for any envelope size.

Note that the variable M has been set for 100 entries but this may be altered to suit.

Also, the cassette has been used as a storage medium but disc storage may be used as required with slight modification to the output stream.

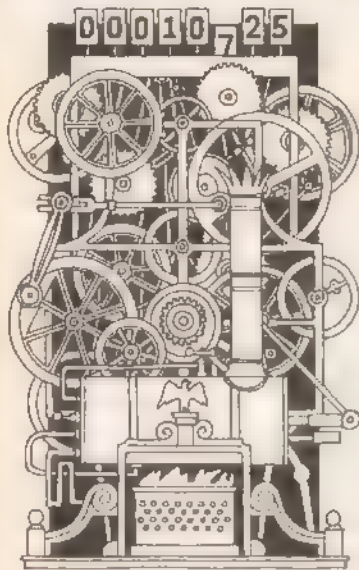
Next week, the rest of the listing, plus a

few brief program notes. ■ the meantime, for the impatient, tape copies of the program are available, at a cost of £2.50. Write to PO Box 17, Burnham on Sea, Somerset TA8 1DT.

```

10 REM *****
20 REM A. ADDRESS MASTER *****
30 REM *****
40 REM *****
50 REM *****
60 REM *****
70 REM *****
80 REM *****
90 REM *****
100 REM *****
110 REM *****
120 REM *****
130 REM *****
140 REM *****
150 REM *****
160 REM *****
170 REM *****
180 REM *****
190 REM *****
200 REM *****
210 REM *****
220 REM *****
230 REM *****
240 REM *****
250 REM *****
260 REM *****
270 REM *****
280 REM *****
290 REM *****
300 REM *****
310 REM *****
320 REM *****
330 REM *****
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1010 REM *****
1020 REM *****
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1080 REM *****
1090 REM *****
1100 REM *****
1110 REM *****
1120 REM *****
1130 REM *****
1140 REM *****
1150 REM *****
1160 REM *****
1170 REM *****
1180 REM *****
1190 REM *****
1200 REM *****
1210 REM *****
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1290 REM *****
1300 REM *****
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1870 REM *****
1880 REM *****
1890 REM *****
1900 REM *****
1910 REM *****
1920 REM *****
1930 REM *****
1940 REM *****
1950 REM *****
1960 REM *****
1970 REM *****
1980 REM *****
1990 REM *****
2000 REM *****

```



Most Centronics printer interfaces include a routine that allows high resolution screen copies to be produced. However, in many cases these copies are too small to see all the detail. This is the case with my Shinwa printer and Kempston interface. To correct this I have written my own routines to produce 2x size as well as 1x size copies of the 24 screen lines.

This is not as straightforward as it first appears. An Epson RX80 printer, for example, only allows 480 bit images per line in single bit Image mode. This is the mode that gives the correct height/width combinations for a screen copy, and, as there are 256 pixels across the Spectrum display file, when producing 2x size copies one needs 512 bit images per line. Another problem occurs when trying to 'point' the Edit lines to find the state of eight vertical pixels.

These two problems fortunately have the same answer, namely to rotate the copy 90 degrees clockwise to put the short side of the copy across the paper instead of down the paper.

We now require only 192 x 8 = 384 bit images per line, and, what is more useful, it allows us to use display file addresses directly to find the state of eight vertical pixels.

If we look at a routine for single size copies you will see that we can start at the bottom of the left hand column. Peek the byte value and transmit it directly to the printer as eight pixels, thus requiring no juggling of values associated with horizontal copying. We can move up the column one byte at a time until we reach the top then advance the paper by 8/72 spacing and continue on the next column. This process is fast enough to write a program in Basic to demonstrate the principle (see List 1). This program

SCREEN COPIES

by Stuart Nicholls

is slow but still usable.

You will notice that this Basic program has its own printer interface routine (Gosub 20) and does not use Lprint. This is because values above 127 when Lprinted are modified by my Kempston software into keywords thus corrupting the data.

The 2x size copy routine is based on the same principle but this time each column is scanned twice. The first time print bits 7 to 4 (as 77665544), the second time to print the bits 3 to 0 (as 33221100).

To enter the machine code for these routines use List 2 which will also save the code as "Copy" Code 64000.299. Remember,

before reloading the code, enter CLEAR 63999.

To produce 1x size copies use Randomize Usr 64222 and for 2x size copies use Randomize Usr 84000. A Break routine is included in the code, but is only active at the end of a screen line. This has been done to avoid problems with partial bit image data being sent to the printer. Break is used in the Basic program then the printer will probably require switching off to re-initialise.

Finally, these routines may need slight modification for other printer/interface combinations.

```

10 REM * MACHINE CODE LOADER PROGRAM *
20 CLEAR 63999
30 LET LINE=1000
40 FOR A=64000 TO 64303 STEP 8
50 RESTORE LINE: LET Z=0
60 FOR B=A TO A+7
70 READ C: IF C>255 THEN GO TO 500
80 POKE B,C: LET Z=Z+C
90 NEXT B
100 READ TOTAL: IF TOTAL<>Z THEN GO TO 500
110 LET LINE=LINE+10
120 NEXT A
130 PRINT "O.K. NOW SAVE M/CODE"
140 SAVE "COPY" CODE 64000,299
150 STOP
500 BEEP 1,1: PRINT "INCORRECT DATA IN LINE *LINE
510 PRINT "PLEASE EDIT LINE THEN RE RUN"
520 PAUSE 100: LIST LINE
530 STOP
1000 DATA 205,134,250,205,155,250,33,224,1456
1010 DATA 87,229,205,171,250,14,8,229,1193
1020 DATA 126,87,95,6,4,203,18,23,562
1030 DATA 203,19,23,16,248,205,192,250,1156
1040 DATA 205,192,250,124,37,230,7,32,1077
1050 DATA 231,225,125,214,32,111,13,32,983
1060 DATA 222,124,214,8,103,254,63,32,1020
1070 DATA 212,62,10,205,192,250,225,205,1361
1080 DATA 84,31,210,0,13,229,205,171,943
1090 DATA 250,14,8,229,124,87,95,6,815
1100 DATA 4,203,26,31,203,27,31,16,541
1110 DATA 248,205,192,250,205,192,250,124,1666
1120 DATA 37,230,7,32,231,225,125,214,1101
1130 DATA 32,111,13,32,222,124,214,8,756
1140 DATA 103,254,63,32,212,62,10,205,941
1150 DATA 192,250,225,205,84,31,210,0,1197
1160 DATA 13,44,194,9,250,201,1,191,903
1170 DATA 227,33,154,250,203,70,192,62,1191
1180 DATA 129,237,121,62,15,237,121,203,1125
1190 DATA 190,201,0,62,27,205,192,250,1135
1200 DATA 62,65,205,192,250,62,8,205,1049
1210 DATA 192,250,201,62,27,205,192,250,1379
1220 DATA 62,75,205,192,250,62,120,205,1179
1230 DATA 192,250,62,1,205,192,250,201,1353
1240 DATA 229,197,1,191,227,30,14,197,1086
1250 DATA 5,237,00,203,58,52,250,243,1132
1260 DATA 5,5,237,121,193,237,89,28,915
1270 DATA 237,89,251,193,225,201,205,134,1535
1280 DATA 250,205,155,250,33,224,87,229,1433
1290 DATA 205,23,251,6,8,229,124,205,1053
1300 DATA 192,250,124,37,230,7,32,246,1118
1310 DATA 225,125,214,32,111,16,250,124,1005
1320 DATA 214,8,103,254,63,32,228,62,764
1330 DATA 10,205,192,250,205,84,31,210,1187
1340 DATA 0,13,225,44,32,205,201,62,786
1350 DATA 28,25,192,250,62,75,205,192,1200
1360 DATA 250,62,192,205,192,250,175,205,1531
1370 DATA 192,250,201,0,0,0,0,0,643
    
```



```

100 GOTO 55
20 REM # PRINTER INTERFACE SUBROUTINE #
30 LET X=INT 50000/2: IF INT(X/2) < X/2 THEN GOTO 20
40 OUT 50333,2: OUT 50333,14: OUT 50333,15: RETURN
50 REM # START PROGRAM BY LOADING SCREEN TO BE COPIED #
60 PRINT AT (1,2) "LOAD_SCREEN_TO_BE_COPIED_NOW"
70 LOAD SCREEN
80 REM # INITIALISE KEMPSTON INTERFACE #
90 OUT 50303,129: OUT 50303,15
100 RESTORE 250
110 REM # SET PRINTER TO 8/72 SPACING #
120 FOR A=1 TO 3: READ Z: GOSUB 20: NEXT A
130 FOR A=22496 TO 22527
140 LET B=A: RESTORE 300: REM # SET BIT IMAGE MODE #
150 FOR Q=1 TO 4: READ Z: GOSUB 20: NEXT Q

```

```

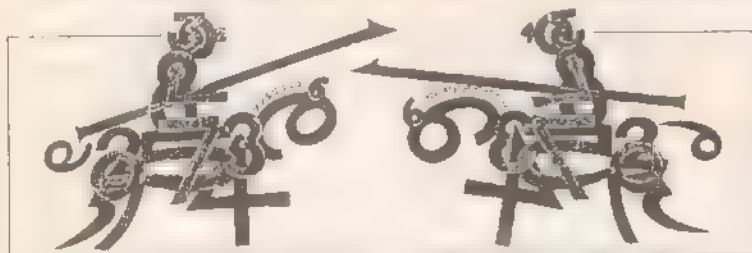
160 FOR P=1 TO 3 : REM # THREE SCREEN SECTIONS #
170 FOR D=1 TO 9 : REM # 8 CHAR PER SCREEN THIRD #
180 LET E=B
190 FOR C=1 TO 8 : REM # 8 BYTES PER CHAR. #
200 LET Z=PEEK B: GOSUB 20: LET B=B+256
210 NEXT C
220 LET B=B-32
230 NEXT D
240 LET B=B-1792
250 NEXT P
260 LET Z=10: GOSUB 20 : REM # PRINT A LINE FEED #
270 NEXT A
280 PAUSE 8
290 DATA 27,49,8 : REM # HOLD SCREEN PICTURE #
300 DATA 27,79,192,0 : REM # CODES FOR 8/72 LINE SPACING #
: REM # CODES FOR 192 BIT IMAGES/LINE #

```

Programming: BBC

MARBLE MANIA

by Shawn McAvery



This is a game for both the BBC B and Electron, called *Marble Mania*. It involves you guiding a marble across a three dimensional landscape, to the goal at the bottom of the screen.

The display will then scroll up to reveal the second half of the level - in all there are 12 screens, making a total of six levels

to complete.

First, type in the loader program (printed in full this week) and save it to tape. Now start typing in the main program, which we'll be finishing off next week. This should be saved directly after the loader on the tape. Chaining the loader should load and run the main program automati-

cally for use on the Electron, line 1220 should be altered to read.

DEFPROC slow:ENDPROC.

Anyone who doesn't want to type the program in can obtain tape copies from the author, at a cost of £3.00. Write to Shawn McAvery, 83 Tipner Road, Stamshaw, Portsmouth, Hants PO2 8QP

```

10 REM *****
20 REM *****
30 REM *****
40 REM *****
50 REM *****
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```

```

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```

Programming: Bytes & Pieces

UDG Editor on Spectrum by Geoffrey Wearmouth

UDG Editors - you've got plenty - but this one is so tiny it will fit in the printer buffer. That means you don't have to alter Ramtop before loading and you won't corrupt the program you wish to modify.

Such a program should not define characters in Data statements, but start by loading the character codes. Similarly, it should have a routine that saves the character codes after the basic program.

To add this utility to your toolkit, just type in the listing and run. If you get the OK message, save the contents of the printer buffer with *Save "udg" Code 23296,258*.

To use the editor enter - *Randomise Udr 23296*. The control keys are shown in the listing.

If you have a rubber keyboard then the following pokes remove the need to press Shift with the cursor keys and use for plotting. *Poke 23543,53 : Poke 23545,56 : Poke 23547,54 : Poke 23549,5 : Poke 23541,58*.

```
1 REM G.Wearmouth. 1985.
```

```
udg Editor.
```

```
2 REM any Spectrum
```

```
3 DATA 0,205,175,13,253,119,4
8,62,128,33,244,71,30,32,6,65
4 DATA 25,119,16,252,45,53,15
,48,251,30,64,33,37,64,205,148
5 DATA 91,175,0,50,53,91,205,
220,91,30,143,33,101,64,205,148
6 DATA 91,33,101,88,17,0,0,25
,54,120,33,143,87,30,20,1
7 DATA 1,1,253,112,87,123,214
,40,95,22,80,203,6,159,246,128
8 DATA 21,18,203,1,48,250,159
,18,28,203,0,48,236,37,203,100
9 DATA 32,227,1,120,15,197,4,
62,141,143,79,203,217,13,253,44
10 DATA 255,33,200,0,205,181,3
,62,43,215,50,8,92,253,78,206
11 DATA 33,233,91,205,220,22,4
8,245,110,193,58,53,91,205,21,23
12 DATA 40,168,24,143,76,205,2
32,10,6,21,28,123,215,16,251,201
13 DATA 225,42,123,92,245,7,7,
7,95,25,17,143,80,6,8,26
14 DATA 119,20,35,16,250,241,6
0,254,21,201,203,161,91,61,200,6
```

```
1
15 DATA 28,201,5,5,4,203,88,24
,5,13,13,12,203,89,200,257
16 DATA 67,99,91,175,201,195,2
29,34,22,3,159,20,198,144,253,11
4
17 DATA 87,33,143,80,205,236,1
0,215,201,113,160,105,210,110,16
1,99
18 DATA 216,103,220,98,186,32,
213,8,201,7,203,10,194,11,196,0
100 PRINT " Just Checking"
200 LET a=0: LET a=23296
210 READ b: POKE a,b: LET a=a+b
: LET a=a+1: IF a<23552 THEN GO
TO 210
220 IF a<26628 THEN PRINT "Ch
ecksum Error": STOP
230 CLS
```

```
1000 REM Control keys
Cursor keys - grid cursor
Space Bar - plot/runplot
"n" - next character
"b" - back one character
"q" - quit
"r" - clear grid
"i" - inverse design
```

```
n,b & q save current design.
```

Dotted Lines on QL by D G Neville

A very basic requirement of any graphics design toolkit is the ability to draw dotted lines between two points. The procedure given opposite will do this for the Sinclair QL.

Firstly we can identify the inputs to the procedure:

x1, y1 and *x2, y2* are the start and end of the required line.

l is the length of the dots and *w* the width. To determine the number of dots (*nl*) and the start of each separate line to be drawn (*x3, y3*) we first determine the length of the line using Pythagoras (*d*) and the step size in both the *x* and *y* (*x0* and *y0*).

The procedure can be fairly easily amended to print dots and spaces between dots of different size, lines of dots.

```
150 DEFINE PROCEDURE Dotted_Line(x1,y1,x2,y2,w,l)
160 LOCAL x3,v3,d,nl,a,b,x0,y0
170 d = ((x2-x1)^2 + (y2-y1)^2) ^ .5
180 nl = d / l
190 x0 = (x2-x1) / nl / 2
200 y0 = (y2-y1) / nl / 2
210 FOR a = 1 TO nl STEP 2
220   FOR b = -w/2 TO w/2
230     x3 = x1 + a * x0 - b * y0 / 1 / 4
240     y3 = y1 + a * y0 + b * x0 / 1 / 4
250     LINE x3,y3 TO x3+x0,y3+y0
260   END FOR b
270 END FOR a
280 END DEFINE Dotted_Line
290 REMARK *****
1000 CLS
1010 SCALE 61,100,0,0
1020 Dotted_Line 120,10,10,60,20,10
1030 Dotted_Line 10,100,130,60,10,20
1040 Dotted_Line 130,50,30,10,3,2
1050 Dotted_Line 80,90,70,10,10,2
1060 Dotted_Line 20,50,100,50,6,20
1070 Dotted_Line 30,100,70,10,15,1
1080 Dotted_Line 90,100,10,10,70,10
1090 STOP
```

Smooth Scrolling on Atari by R Parkes

This short routine was written on an Atari 130XE but should also work on any of the XL series. It allows the Graphics 0 text screen to be smooth scrolled so is useful for printing out pages of text to a Graphics 0 screen, giving a much more professional look.

The routine works by poking location 622 with a 1 which sets up a smooth scroll every time the screen is scrolled up a logical line, then all that needs to be done is to alter the display list so as to carry out the smooth scroll, this is done in line 30.

```
8 REM SMOOTH SCROLLING
9 REM
10 POKE 622,1:GRAPHICS 0
20 DL=PEEK(560)+256*PEEK(561)
30 POKE DL+3,98:FOR J=5 TO 98:POKE DL+J,
34:NEXT J
35 REM END OF SMOOTH SCROLLING SETUP
36 REM
37 REM EXAMPLE
38 REM TYPE UNDERLINED CHARACTERS IN
INVERSE
39 REM
40 ? CHR$(127):"Popular Computing Weekly
"
50 ? CHR$(127):"POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY
"
60 GOTO 40
```


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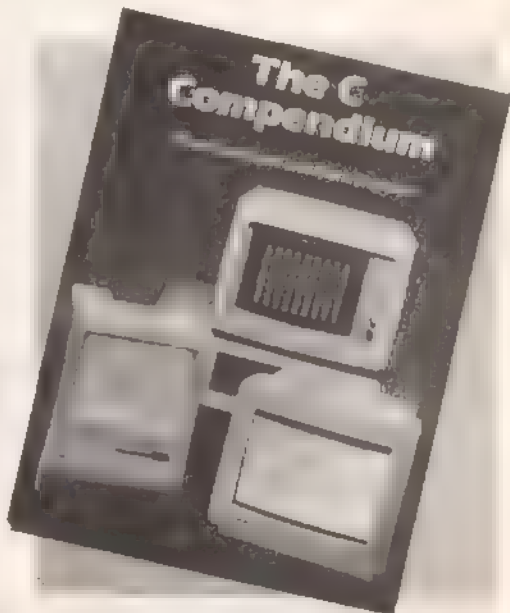
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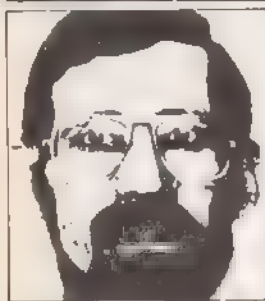
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Programming: Peek & Poke



Random numbers

G Costello, of London NW3, writes.

Q I would like to buy a computer that can generate random numbers in sets of 10 from a range of 1-60, and store them. I need about 1,000 sets. I then want to list on screen the three most common numbers. What computer could do this for the least cost?

A Since you'll be handling about 10,000 numbers, plus memory overhead for the program, you need a computer

with at least 16K of free memory. This includes just about every computer on the market, with the exception of the C16, and one or two others.

So you have no problem finding a machine although I confess to being intrigued as to why you want to do this. In any case, the problem is not a difficult one - simply an exercise in loops and array-handling.

In rough terms, what you need to do is this: set up a two dimensional array, say COUNT(10,1000); consecutively fill each element with a random number generated by a statement such as INT (RND(1) * 60) + 1, ten numbers for each set, for 1,000 sets.

To check for the most common numbers, use a second, one-dimensional array -CHECK(60) - then increment each element as you find each number from 1 to 60.

Is there anything about your computer you don't understand, and which everyone else seems to take for granted? Whatever your problem **Peek** it to **Kenn Garroch** and every week he will **Poke** back as many answers as he can. The address is **Peek & Poke**, PCW, 12-13 Little Newport Street, London WC2R 3LD

Atari 520 ST specifications

Roland Givan, of Brentwood, Essex, writes.

Q I am intending to buy an Atari 520STM and I would be grateful if you could clarify some of the specifications. As far as I can tell, the 520STM only displays low-res graphics. If this is so, can GEM be run on it without a separate monitor?

Who exactly will my local dealer? If Atari means the shop which sells me my machine this could be difficult because I intend to buy mail order.

A The 520STM will display its lowest graphics resolution through the TV modulator, giving 320 x 200 pixels and 16 colours. GEM will work perfectly in this mode, so you have no

worries there.

Neither need you fret about support. You should get full co-operation from your nearest dealer, regardless of where you actually buy your machine.

Copyright procedure

David Fox, of Sheffield, writes.

Q I would like to feature a well-known piece of music in one of my games. Do I have to get copyright permission?

A If the music is still in copyright - that is, if it's not a traditional piece, such as Greensleeves - then they will probably have had to obtain permission to use it. In your case, it depends on whether you want to have your programs published. If you do, then obtain a copy of the score and write to the publishers requesting permission. The best thing to do is to use pieces that are out of copyright. These usually have the word **TRAD** at the top of the music. Or write an original piece.

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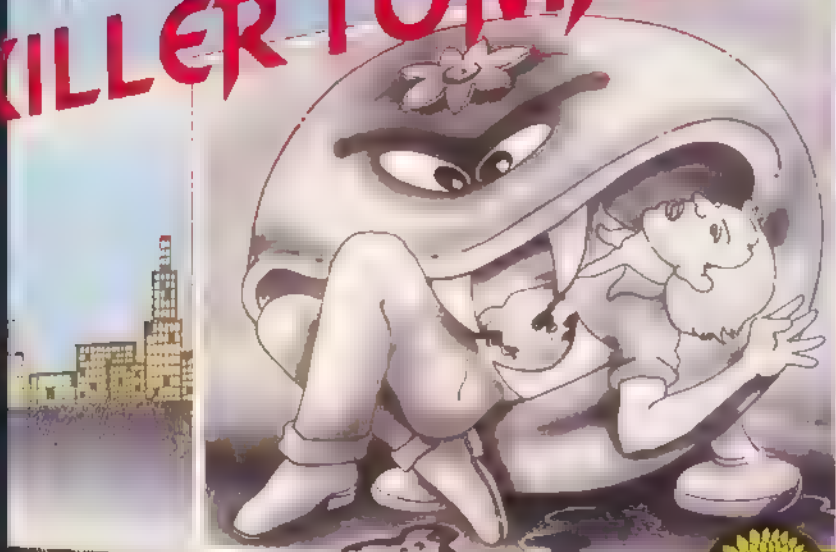
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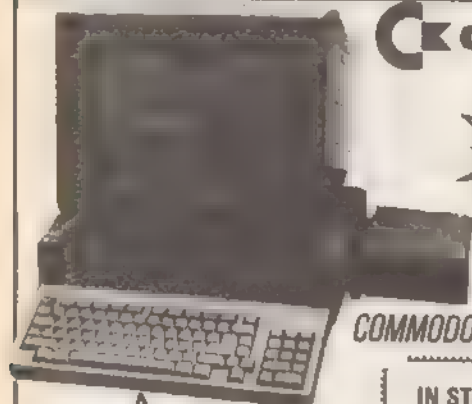
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New Releases

John Cook looks through this week's new arrivals

Amstrad

Program Dr Who and the Mines of Terror Type Arcade Adventure Micro Amstrad Price £11.95 (tape) £15.95 (disc) **Supplier** Micropower, Northwood House, North St, Leeds, LS7 2AA.

Program Turbo Esprit Type Arcade Micro Amstrad Price £8.95 **Supplier** Durell, Castle Lodge, Castle Green, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4AB

Program The Price of Magic Type Adventure Micro Amstrad Price £9.95 **Supplier** Level 9 Computing, PO Box 39, Weston Super Mare, Avon, BS24 9UR.

Program Shadowfire Type Adventure Micro Amstrad Price £9.95 **Supplier** Beyond, Wellington House, Upper St Martins Lane, London WC2

It's almost a year since *Shadowfire* was released for the Commodore, then the Spectrum soon afterwards; so obviously someone's been taking their time doing this Amstrad conversion.

Never mind, though - for Amstrad strategy addicts who have been straining at the leash waiting for this release, it was worth the wait.



For those with short memories, the scenario is a futuristic *Mission Impossible*, with you controlling a team of five renegades who are sent on a suicide rescue job, on board the sky fortress Zoff V.

Fairly average space opera you might say, but what makes the game special is the way you control the team, in fact, the whole game - via a series of icons. The whole thing has been faithfully recreated, together with the thumping soundtrack.

In short, better than the Spectrum version, only slightly inferior to the original, plays like a dream; what more do you want?

Program Toadrunner Type Arcade Adventure Micro Amstrad Price £8.95 **Supplier** Ariolasoft UK, Long Acre, London WC2.

Program World Cup Carnival Type Arcade Micro Amstrad Price £6.95 (tape) £14.95 (disc) **Supplier** US Gold, Unit 10, The Parkway Industrial Centre, Henage St, Birmingham B7

Program Blackstar Type Adventure Micro PCW 8256 Price £14.95 **Supplier** CRL, Kings Yd, Carpenter's Rd, London E15.

Program SAS Raid Type Adventure Micro PCW 8256 Price £14.95 **Supplier** CRL, 9 Kings Yard, Carpenter's Rd, London E15

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Program The Price of Magic Type Adventure Micro BBC Price 9.95 **Supplier** Level 9 Computing, PO Box 39, Weston Super Mare, Avon, BS24 9UR

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Program Super Hits Type Compilation Micro C16/Plus 4 Price £6.95 **Supplier** US Gold, Unit 10, The Parkway Industrial Centre, Henage St, Birmingham B7.

Commodore 64

Program HMS Atlantis Type Adventure Micro Commodore 64 Price £1.99 **Supplier** Macmillan Software, 4 Little Essex Street, London WC2.

Program Speedipen Type Utility Micro Commodore 64 Price £17.50 (disc) **Supplier** JCL Software, 1, Sheffield Road, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Program Saboteur Type Arcade Micro Commodore 64 Price £8.95 **Supplier** Durell, Castle Lodge, Castle Green, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4AB.

Thwack! Your knife hits a guard in the neck. Thwack! You drop-kick another guard and the comput-

Pick of the week

Splitting Images

Program Splitting Images Type Arcade Strategy Machine Spectrum Price £7.85 **Supplier** Domark, 204 Worple Road Wimbledon, London SW20 8PN

One day, the man that brought the jigsaw into the computer age (that's what it says on the press release, believe me) will be hailed as a far-sighted visionary of a new era. One day the leaders East and West will hold hands, skip round the White House lawns, make daisy chains and proclaim war is a bad thing. I thought as I read said release.

Until that time arrives, I will continue to treat any new Domark release with trepidation. What will they think of next, eh?

I'll tell you what - it's called *Splitting Images* - you know, after that wacky TV wizard prang. The kids will love it.

Yes, Domark has released a game very loosely connected with the series that has just come off air.

All will be forgiven if the

game is any good. And it is possibly one of the best I've played this year so far. The Dutch programming team, EnriSoft, has come up with one hell of a brainstormer.

Essentially, it's just solving a sliding block puzzle against time, but there are some great touches. You must solve a 5 by 4 puzzle on a 5 by 5 grid. You start off with an empty frame, and release pieces one by one from a hidden stack on the top right (all movement is under multi-colour cursor control). But not all pieces released are puzzle pieces - and by clever manipulation of these strange objects, vast bonuses can be gained; like colliding a dripping tap with a bomb... but if you don't get the bomb off screen within a few seconds you're in trouble.

The *Splitting Images* connection is that the completed screen images comprise famous figures: Ronnie, Maggie, Sir Clive, etc.

Forget the hype and don't think twice about the price - this one really is worth it.

er master plan is yours. Just set the bomb, defeat the other hundred guards, avoid being savaged by the vicious dobermanns, clamber across the roof, into your helicopter and away before the time runs out.

Another successful mission for *Saboteur*. Durell's conversion for the Spectrum hit. Yes, it's violent but jolly good fun too - where so many

games tried and failed, *Saboteur* delivers the goods. Buy it!

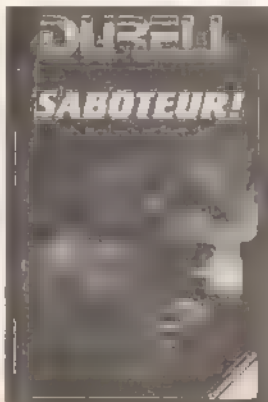
Program World Cup Carnival Type Arcade Micro Commodore 64 Price £9.95 (tape) £14.95 (disc) **Supplier** US Gold, Unit 10, Parkway Industrial Centre Henage St, Birmingham B7

All the signs are there. The panic buying of lager, potato munchies and caffeine tablets. David Coleman has just gone in for his 1,400 day service. People are humming *Land of Hope and Glory* on the Fenchurch line. It can only mean one thing. It's World Cup time again.

And to make it official, *World Cup Carnival* has just arrived in the office.

This is an impressive package - glossy full colour 'World Cup facts' poster, glossy full colour World Cup league table, together with adhesive World Cup flags. World Cup supporter's badge and a free competition to win games or a compact disc. Phew!

Oh... and there's this com-



puter game as well. Remember Artic's *World Cup*? It has to be said that *World Cup Carnival* is not going to be anything new to you if you already have the Artic version. A few frills have been added, but the gameplay is the same, as are the major graphics and sprites. A good enough game in its time, but it does look a bit dated now.

If you are football mad, already seething with sporting patriotism, like stickers and desperately want to play computer games during half time,

Program SAS Raid Type Adventure **Micro** PCW 8256 **Price** £14.95 **Supplier** CRL, 9 Kings Yard, Carpenter's Rd, London E15.

Spectrum

Program World Cup Carnival Type Arcade **Micro** Spectrum **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** US Gold, Unit 10, The Parkway Industrial Centre, Henage St, Birmingham B7.

Program Outworld Type Strategy **Micro** Spectrum **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Durome Software, Victoria House, 6 Vicarage Rd, Bradwell Village, Millon Keynes Bucks, MK13 9AQ.

Program Podder Type Arcade **Micro** Spectrum **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Central Solutions, 500 Chesham House, 150 Regent St, London W1.

Program A Trick of the Tale Type Arcade **Micro** Spectrum **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Central Solutions, 500 Chesham House, 150 Regent St, London W1.

Program Toadrunner Type Arcade/Adventure **Micro** Spectrum **Price** £7.95 **Supplier** Ariolasoft UK, Long Acre, London WC2.

I've got to admit that *Toadrunner* is a pretty good name for a game - almost the same league as *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes* in fact - but if you're expecting a souped up version of *Frogger*, then you'd be in for a surprise, as *Toadrunner* is a new arcade adventure from Ariolasoft.

No American import this, but a thoroughly home grown product, written by David Harper who, those with a good memory will remember, wrote *Riddlers Den*, which also featured an amphibian in the starring role.

Here, your task is to hop around the 60-odd screens, discover the Stone Heart, destroy it, then get a kiss from a princess which will transform you into a prince. (Haven't I heard all this somewhere before?)

Both the Amstrad and Spectrum versions are really quite good. The maze like plan-view graphics are distinctive and give the whole thing something of a fairytale atmosphere.

The puzzles vary in difficulty from simple logic (magnets at-

tract metal objects) to the more lateral thinking types (to get past the Gorgon for instance will require some mythological background knowledge, plus a sharp nose for puns, while other problems simply require a eye for detail).

Fans of this type of game are unlikely to be disappointed, apart from the price tag. Every game of this sort must be compared to *Spellbound* - that excellent Mastertronic title. That was £2.99, this one is considerably more.

Not the best value in town then, but if you're an arcade adventurer with royal aspirations, webbed feet and eight quid or so to spend, this one's for you.

Program The Price of Magic Type Adventure **Micro** Spectrum **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Level 9 Computing, PO Box 39, Weston Super Mare, Avon, BS24 9UR.



Program Laser Basic Type Utility **Micro** Spectrum **Price** £14.95 **Supplier** Ocean, 6 Central St, Manchester, M2.

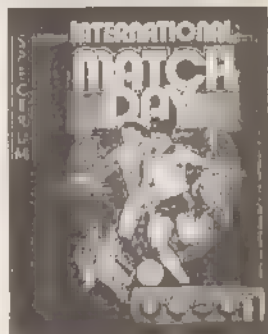
Program Laser Compiler Type Utility **Micro** Spectrum **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Ocean, 6 Central St, Manchester, M2.

Program World Cup Carnival Type Arcade **Micro** Spectrum **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** US Gold, Unit 10, The Parkway Industrial Centre, Henage St, Birmingham B7.

Program International Match Day Type Arcade **Micro** Spectrum 128 **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Ocean Software, 6 Central Street, Manchester M2 5NS.

More football - this time from those software giants Ocean - and it's for the Spectrum 128 too.

Not surprisingly, *International Match Day* is a revamped



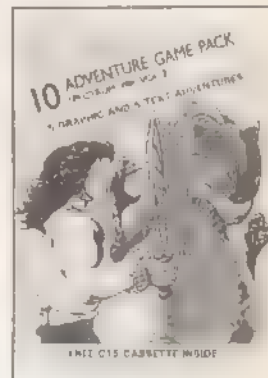
version of that well known program *Match Day* but there are some new features mainly in the shape of an extra option, that of an International Knock-out tournament. As before, you can directly control one player at a time with the rest of your team pollering around under computer control. You can tell which player is activated because the socks change colour.

The action isn't exactly fast and furious, but it plays well and the 3-D perspective is effective enough.

What the game goes have is a host of options - would that Bobby Robson had this many.

Colours can be changed, team names can be changed (alas, Crystal Palace blew out to Spain 7-0), controls can be changed, handicaps can be set, difficulty altered. No shortage of variety here, Brian.

General opinion has that this is the best of its type for the Spectrum, so if you feel the need for a football game on your 128, then look no further.



Program Adventure Game Pack Vol 2 Type Adventure **Micro** Spectrum **Price** £8.95 **Supplier** Central Solutions, 500 Chesham House, 150 Regent St, London W1.



then this would be a good purchase. I'll stick to making the tea.

MSX

Program The Price of Magic Type Adventure **Micro** MSX **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Level 9 Computing, PO Box 39, Weston Super Mare, Avon BS24 9UR.



PCW 8256

Program Blackstar Type Adventure **Micro** PCW 8256 **Price** £14.95 **Supplier** CRL, 9 Kings Yard, Carpenter's Rd, London E15.

Top Twenty

- | | | |
|---------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 (1) | Thrust (C64) | Firebird |
| 2 (5) | Formula One Simulator (Various) | Mastertronic |
| 3 (6) | Kik Start (Spectrum, C64, C16) | Mastertronic |
| 4 (7) | Commando (Various) | Elite |
| 5 (11) | Batman (Spectrum, Amstrad) | Ocean |
| 6 (2) | Spindizzy (Spectrum, C64, Amstrad) | Electric Dreams |
| 7 (4) | International Karate (Spectrum, C64) | System 3 |
| 8 (-) | Rock 'n' Wrestle (Sp, C64, Ams) | Melbourne House |
| 9 (10) | Bomb Jack (Spectrum, C64, Amstrad) | Elite |
| 10 (11) | Spellbound (Spectrum, C64, Amstrad) | Mastertronic |



Thrust stays at no 1



Kik Start up to no 3

- | | | |
|---------|---|--------------|
| 11 (8) | They Sold (2) (Spectrum, C64, Amstrad) | Mastertronic |
| 12 (13) | Way of the Tiger (Spectrum, Amstrad, MSX) | Gremilin |
| 13 (-) | Comp. Hits 10 Vol 2 (Various) | Beau Jolly |
| 14 (9) | Vegas Jackpot (Various) | Mastertronic |
| 15 (-) | Saboteur (Spectrum, C64, Amstrad) | Durell |
| 16 (20) | Last V8 (C64, Amstrad, Atari) | Mastertronic |
| 17 (16) | Boulder (Spectrum, C64, Amstrad, Atari) | Gremilin |
| 18 (18) | V (Spectrum, C64) | Ocean |
| 19 (-) | Action Biker (Spectrum, C64, C16, Atari) | Mastertronic |
| 20 (17) | Turbo Esprit (Spectrum, Amstrad) | Durell |

Top Tens

Amstrad

- | | |
|--------|---------------------------------|
| 1 (1) | Get Dexter (PSS) |
| 2 (-) | Winter Games (Epyr/US Gold) |
| 3 (5) | Commando (Elite) |
| 4 (10) | Last V8 (Mastertronic) |
| 5 (6) | They Sold (2) (Hit Squad) |
| 6 (2) | Spindizzy (Electric Dreams) |
| 7 (3) | Batman (Ocean) |
| 8 (-) | Way of the Tiger (Gremilin) |
| 9 (-) | Comp. Hits 10 (10) (Beau Jolly) |
| 10 (9) | Into Oblivion (Mastertronic) |



All figures compiled by Gallup/Microscope

Commodore 64

- | | |
|--------|------------------------------------|
| 1 (-) | Thrust (Firebird) |
| 2 (2) | Int Karate (System 3) |
| 3 (3) | Spindizzy (Electric Dreams) |
| 4 (8) | Spellbound (Mastertronic) |
| 5 (6) | PST-100 Company (US Games) |
| 6 (-) | Biggles (Mirrorsoft) |
| 7 (4) | F1 Simulator (Mastertronic) |
| 8 (-) | Rock 'n' Wrestle (Melbourne House) |
| 9 (-) | Saboteur (Durell) |
| 10 (-) | Golf (Ariolasoft) |

Atari

- | | |
|--------|------------------------------|
| 1 (1) | Vegas Jackpot (Mastertronic) |
| 2 (7) | Action Biker (Mastertronic) |
| 3 (4) | Last V8 (Mastertronic) |
| 4 (2) | New York City (Americana) |
| 5 (6) | Ollies Follies (Americana) |
| 6 (8) | Fighter Pilot (Digital) |
| 7 (9) | Shamus (Americana) |
| 8 (5) | One Man (Mastertronic) |
| 9 (3) | Scouter (Americana) |
| 10 (-) | Arcade Classics (Datasoft) |

BBC

- | | |
|--------|------------------------------|
| 1 (1) | Commando (Elite) |
| 2 (2) | Winter Olympics (Tynesoft) |
| 3 (4) | Tennis (Bugbyte) |
| 4 (8) | Karate Combat (Superior) |
| 5 (-) | Phantom Combat (Dector Soft) |
| 6 (-) | Citadel (Superior) |
| 7 (3) | Bruce Lee (US Gold) |
| 8 (-) | Jack Attack (Bugbyte) |
| 9 (-) | Repton 2 (Superior) |
| 10 (-) | Combat Lynx (Durell) |

Spectrum

- | | |
|--------|------------------------------------|
| 1 (-) | Batman (Ocean) |
| 2 (5) | Starstrike 2 (Realtime) |
| 3 (-) | Rock 'n' Wrestle (Melbourne House) |
| 4 (2) | Green Beret (Imagine) |
| 5 (7) | Way Of The Tiger (Gremilin) |
| 6 (8) | Freeman (Mastertronic) |
| 7 (6) | Hvy On The Magik (Bargoyne) |
| 8 (-) | Turbo Esprit (Durell) |
| 9 (9) | Bomb Jack (Elite) |
| 10 (-) | V (Ocean) |

NEXT WEEK SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

● Making music

Next week's Popular supplement turns to music-making on your micro.

If you've always wanted to write and play music on your computer, you'll need this supplement.



Next week, we'll be looking at a wide range of musical offerings on a number of machines.

● Plus . . .

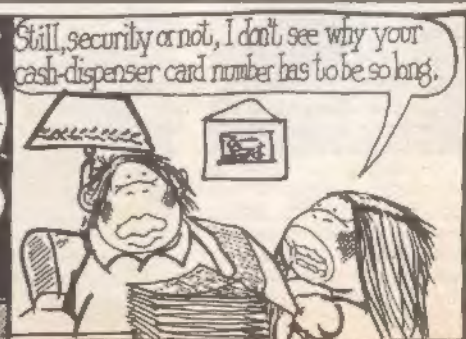
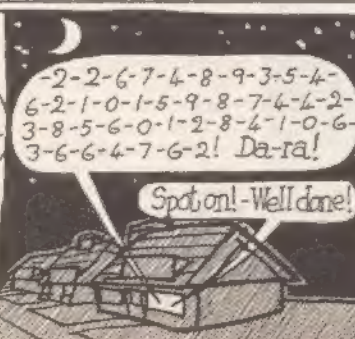
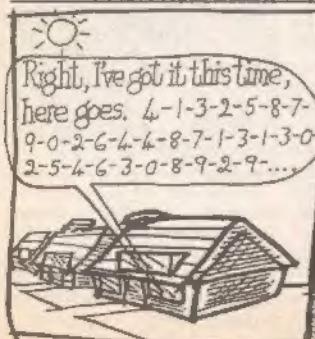
Mark Jenkins begins a new regular column on the musical potential of micros.

● Languages


Tired of the limitations of Basic? Frustrated by machine code? Try something new . . . a new series on computer languages begins next week with the currently fashionable C.

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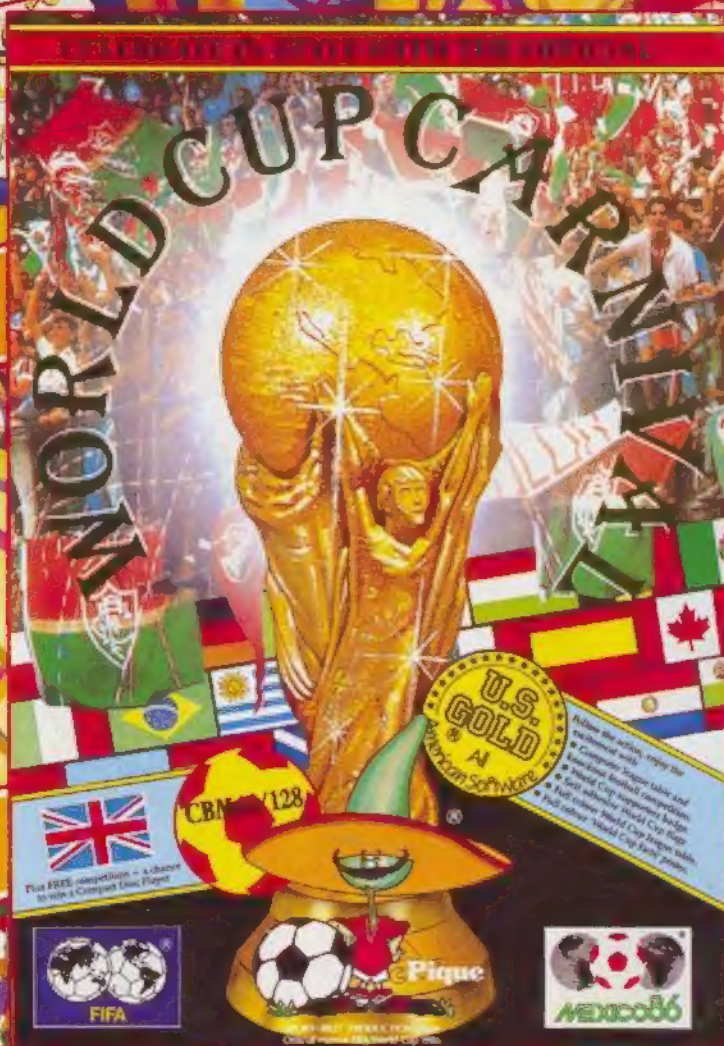
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